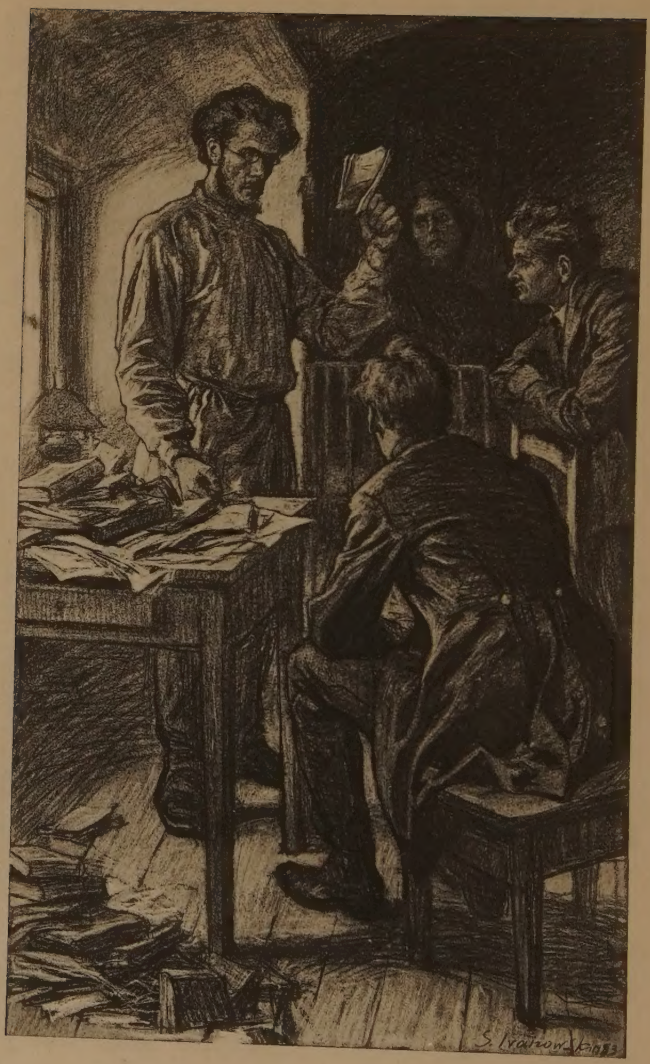
IVÁN TURGÉNIEFF

VOLUME VIII

VIRGIN SOIL

PART I



THE NOVELS AND STORIES OF
IVÁN TURGÉNIEFF

VIRGIN SOIL

PART I

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN BY
ISABEL F. HAPGOOD

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1904

Copyright, 1904, by
Charles Scribner's Sons

THE DE VINNE PRESS

PREFACE

"VIRGIN SOIL," Turgénieff's last great romance, was published in 1877, beginning in the January number of the *European Messenger*. For three years previously Turgénieff had been collecting materials, in Russia and abroad, for this new novel, which was consecrated to the portrayal of the "new men." He always sedulously followed up all new phenomena in Russian life, and the movement "to the people," which made its appearance at the beginning of the '70s, together with the socialistic propaganda, had interested him deeply for years.

Like "Fathers and Children" and "Smoke," "Virgin Soil," on its appearance, instantly evoked in the literary world and still more in the public interminable disputes, the subject of which was, as before, the author's personal attitude toward the topic of the time which was most palpitating with interest. Many of the judgments expressed were hostile to Turgénieff, so that once more he began (as he had already done thirteen or fourteen years previously, after the harsh criticisms on "Fathers and Children") to express a decided wish to abandon his literary activity.

In February, 1878, in response to a request from a new journal in Odessa (*The Truth*), that he would send something for publication, he categorically refused, adding: "It seems to me that the public has no claim on you. And any claims can hardly be taken seriously, judging by the reception accorded to my last works. But be that as it may, *I have laid down my pen and shall never take it up again.*" To this date, in all probability, belongs one of the "Poems in Prose," which begins with Púshkin's words: "Thou shalt hear the judgment of the dullard," . . . . and capitally expresses the mood of the author's grief-stung soul.

During the ten years which had elapsed since the publication of "Smoke," the critics and the public in general had been rather cold toward Turgénieff. He wrote no great romance during that period, but the short stories which he sent with great regularity to the journals would have aroused enthusiasm had they been from any other pen. They included, among others, that gem, "A King Lear of the Steppes." He had not visited Russia during that period, although it had previously been his custom to return thither almost annually. The attacks of gout from which he suffered grew increasingly violent, and he lived in Paris, Baden, or with the Viardots near Paris. This long-continued absence furnished the hostile critics with a plausible excuse for as-

serting that he did not know what he was talking about.

"Virgin Soil" did not make a great impression on the reading public, and people began to say not only that he did not know the new Russia, but that his powers were exhausted. They had said the same thing about all the other great writers in their day. The true explanation of these comments is to be found in the fact that this book is even more cheerless than "Smoke," its predecessor, more devoid of faith. It contains no energetic person like Potúgin, while its hero, Nezhdánoff, is even more lacking in vitality than Litvínoff. The heroic strain is exhausted in Russian life, and the poet is not, of course, responsible, says one critic, if his new works are devoid of the breathless interest of his former writings.

Turgénieff, as we know, divided people in general into two grand classes—the Hamlets and the Don Quixotes. Nezhdánoff falls into the Hamlet class, the class of the weak. The author employed a great deal of tenderness and warmth of feeling in delineating these weak men with double aims, who appear so often as his heroes. Nezhdánoff has three distinct lines of interest—his love for Marianna, his literary aspirations, and his revolutionary activity. But he is pure and sincere. He forms the centre of a group of people who, unlike himself, are strong of will

and strong in faith, but, on the other hand, remarkably ill-endowed mentally, narrow, dull—downright blockheads. Against that grey background Nezhdánoff stands out in clear, bright relief. He was a transitory type which replaced Bazároff and, unlike the latter, did not look down with haughty condescension on, but passionately hastened to embrace, the peasant who, on his side, remained distrustful and repelled advances.

The man who voluntarily surrenders himself to the superior woman is a favorite theme with Turgénieff, and he had already exploited it in "Ásya," "Rúdin," "Smoke," and other works, before he created Nezhdánoff on the same lines. Marianna herself is another of his brilliant portraits of Russian women, according to some critics; according to others, the least successful of all his feminine figures, in whom he vainly exerts all his efforts to interest the reader.

Some interesting comments are contained in a letter from Turgénieff, dated at Paris, January 22, 1877, and addressed to Yákoff Petróvitch Polónsky, the poet:

"Dear Y. P., I am delighted that the cause of thy silence was the bad condition of thy ink; for I was beginning to think that the failure of 'Virgin Soil' (the first part), of which I have been informed from various quarters, had turned out to be so great that thou, out of

friendship toward me, couldst not make up thy mind to write.—I fully agree with many of thy remarks (especially as to the ill-judged chapter about Fómushka and Fímushka,—it was a whim of mine—I recalled just such a little old couple, whom I had once known); only I beg thee to reserve thy definitive criticism until the second part shall appear.—I tried in every possible way to persuade Stasiulévitch [1] not to break up the romance, but unfortunately, I failed.

"It is thy opinion that in 'Virgin Soil,' effort, superfluous mental toil, and a certain timidity are perceptible . . . . perhaps that is so; I will make only one observation,—that not a single one of my large works was written so quickly, so easily (in three months),—and with so few erasures. Judge for thyself after that!—(The idea had long been revolving in my head, I had several times started to carry it out—but at last I wrote the whole piece straight from the shoulder, as the saying is.) And it turns out that one can know nothing in advance.

"In any case—and whatever decisive opinion the public may form—this is, of course, my last work. It is enough! . . . .

"I took the letter S. to indicate the town as I might have taken A. B.,—or even X.;— and was not thinking in the least of Simbírsk or Samára.

"Thou sayest that the young men are not fully sketched;—I know not what I could add to Markéloff and Nezhdánoff;—but the principal hero of the romance, Solómin, only makes his appearance in the second part."

[1] The editor of the *European Messenger*.—TRANSLATOR.

In another letter to Polónsky, dated February 18, Turgénieff writes:

"There was a time when I begged permission of thee not to mention T . . again;—now I make the same request with regard to 'Virgin Soil.'—Whatever may be its final fate, this is my last independent literary work: this decision of mine is irrevocable:—my name shall never appear again. I would have liked to have my last word meet with a more indulgent reception; but that it is the last, thou mayest cherish as little doubt as of . . . . well, as of my friendship for thee.—And nothing more is to be said about it."

To another friend, I. I. Másloff, he writes under date of March 5, 1877:

"I thank thee for thy comment on the second part of my romance, and on 'Virgin Soil' in general; it delighted me all the more because I have never been subjected to such universal censure in the journals.—However, that is now a thing of the past for me, as I am fairly determined to write no more, to throw aside my pen, which has served me for more than thirty years;—it is high time for the veterans to resign."

He did not resign, however.

I. F. H.

VIRGIN SOIL

(1876)

VIRGIN SOIL

PART FIRST

I

"Virgin soil should be broken up not with the primitive plough, which skims along the surface, but with the modern plough, which cuts deep."—*From the Note-book of a Proprietor-Agriculturist.*

IN the spring of 1868, about one o'clock in the day, a man of about seven and twenty years of age, carelessly and poorly clad, was ascending the back stairs of a five-story house on Officers Street in Petersburg. Clumping heavily with his patched overshoes, slowly swaying his heavy, awkward body, this man at last reached the very top of the staircase, halted in front of a broken, half-open door—and, without ringing the bell, but merely heaving a noisy sigh, precipitated himself into the small, dark vestibule.

"Is Nezhdánoff at home?"—he shouted, in a thick, loud voice.

"No, he is not—I am here; come in,"—rang out a feminine voice, which was also decidedly harsh, from the adjoining room.

"Miss Mashúrin?"—queried the newcomer.

"The very person.—And you are Ostrodúmoff?"

"Pímen Ostrodúmoff,"—replied the man; and having first carefully removed his overshoes, and then hung his little old cloak on a nail, he entered the room whence the woman's voice had proceeded.

Low-ceiled, squalid, its walls covered with paper of a muddy-green hue, this room was scantily lighted by two small, dusty windows. The only furniture it contained was an iron bedstead in one corner, a table in the centre, a few chairs, and a set of shelves piled with books.—By the table sat a woman thirty years of age, her hair devoid of covering, in a black woollen gown, smoking a cigarette. When she saw Ostrodúmoff enter, she silently offered him her broad, red hand. He shook it, as silently,—and, dropping into a chair, pulled a half-smoked cigar from his side pocket. Miss Mashúrin gave him a light,—he began to smoke, and the two, without uttering a word, without even exchanging a glance, set to emitting wreaths of bluish smoke into the dim air of the room, which, without that addition, was already sufficiently permeated with it.

The two smokers had something in common, although they did not resemble each other in features. These slovenly figures, with their big lips, teeth, and noses (Ostrodúmoff was pock-marked, to boot), were expressive of something honourable, steadfast, and hard-working.

"Have you seen Nezhdánoff?"—asked Ostrodúmoff, at last.

"Yes; he will be here directly. He has gone to the library with some books."

Ostrodúmoff spat to one side.

"Why has he taken to running about constantly? One can never catch him."

Miss Mashúrin got herself another cigarette.

"He is bored,"—she said, as she carefully lighted it.

"Bored!"—repeated Ostrodúmoff, reproachfully.—"Here's self-indulgence for you! One would suppose that he had no occupations in common with us. Here, God willing, we are getting matters in hand, in proper fashion,—but he is bored!"

"Has the letter from Moscow arrived?"—asked Miss Mashúrin, after a brief pause.

"Yes . . . . day before yesterday."

"Have you read it?"

Ostrodúmoff merely nodded.

"Well . . . . and what does it say?"

"What does it say?—we shall have to go soon."

Miss Mashúrin took the cigarette out of her mouth.—"Why so? Everything is going well there, I hear."

"Things are taking their course. Only one man has proved himself to be untrustworthy. So . . . he must be removed, if not got rid of al-

together. And there are other matters as well.—You are summoned."

"In the letter?"

"Yes; in the letter."

"Well, all right!"—she ejaculated:—"if the order is issued—there's no occasion for argument!"

"Of course not. Only, without money, it is absolutely impossible; and where are we to get it, that same money?"

Miss Mashúrin meditated.

"Nezhdánoff must procure it,"—she said, in a low voice, as though speaking to herself.

"That is precisely what I came for,"—remarked Ostrodúmoff.

"Have you the letter with you?" suddenly inquired Miss Mashúrin.

"Yes. Would you like to read it?"

"Give it to me . . . or, no, it is unnecessary. We will read it together . . . later."

"I am telling you the truth,"—grumbled Ostrodúmoff:—"you need have no doubts."

"I have none."

And again both relapsed into silence, and, as before, only wreaths of smoke escaped from their speechless lips, and rose, in faint undulations, above their frousy heads.

The clumping of overshoes resounded in the anteroom.

"There he is!"—whispered Miss Mashúrin.

The door opened a little, and through the interstice a head was thrust—only, it was not Nezhdánoff's head.

It was a small, round head, with stiff black hair, a broad, furrowed brow, small, very vivacious brown eyes beneath thick brows, with an upturned nose resembling a duck's bill, and a small, rosy, comically-formed mouth. This head took a survey, nodded, laughed,—incidentally displayed a multitude of tiny, white teeth,—and entered the room along with its puny, ugly body with short arms and somewhat crooked, somewhat lame little legs. And no sooner did Miss Mashúrin and Ostrodúmoff espy that small head, than both expressed upon their countenances something in the nature of condescending scorn, exactly as though each of them inwardly ejaculated: "Ah! *that* fellow!"—and they uttered not a single word; they did not even move. But the reception accorded to him not only did not disconcert the newly-arrived visitor, but, apparently, afforded him a certain satisfaction.

"What doth this signify?"—he said, in a squeaking voice.—"A duet? Why not a trio? And where 's the leading tenor?"

"Are you inquiring about Mr. Nezhdánoff, Mr. Pákhlin?"—rejoined Ostrodúmoff, with a serious mien.

"Exactly so, Mr. Ostrodúmoff; about him."

"In all probability he will be here soon, Mr. Pákhlin."

"I am very glad to hear it, Mr. Ostrodúmoff."

The lame little man turned to Miss Mashúrin. She was sitting with her brows contracted in a frown, and continued, in a leisurely manner, to puff at her cigarette.

"How is your health, my dearest . . . . dearest. . . . Well, now, how annoying! I am always forgetting how to address you by your name and patronymic!"

Miss Mashúrin shrugged her shoulders.

"And it is quite unnecessary that you should know! My surname is known to you. What more do you require!—And what sort of a question is that—'How is your health?'—Cannot you see that I am alive?"

"Perfectly, perfectly correct!"—exclaimed Pákhlin, inflating his nostrils and twitching his eyebrows:—"if you were not alive, your most humble servant would not have the pleasure of seeing you here and conversing with you!—Ascribe my inquiry to an inveterate bad habit. And now, as to the name and patronymic. . . Do you know, it's awkward, somehow, to say 'Mashúrina'[1] straight out! I am aware, it is true, that you never sign your letters otherwise

[1] It is permissible to allude to a woman by the feminine form of her family name, without any prefix whatever. But this form—which Turgénieff uses throughout for this character—is awkward in English.—TRANSLATOR.

than 'Bonaparte'!—I mean to say, 'Mashúrina'!—But, all the same, in conversation . . . ."

"But who asked you to converse with me?"

Pákhlin began to laugh in a nervous way, as though he were choking.

"Come, that will do, my dear; my sweet little dove, give me your hand; don't get angry, for I know that you are extremely good-natured, and so am I. . . Well? . . . ."

Pákhlin extended his hand. . . . Miss Mashúrin stared gloomily at him—but she gave him her hand, nevertheless.

"If it is imperatively necessary for you to know my name,"—said she, still with the same gloomy aspect—"so be it: my name is Thékla."

"And mine is Pímen," added Ostrodúmoff, in a bass voice.

"Akh! that is very . . . . very edifying! But, in that case, tell me, oh, Thékla! and you, oh, Pímen! tell me, why you both treat me in so hostile, so persistently-hostile a manner, while I . . . ."

"Miss Mashúrin thinks,"—interrupted Ostrodúmoff,—"that, as you look at everything from its ridiculous side, it is not possible to rely upon you."

Pákhlin twirled abruptly round on his heels.

"There it is; that 's the perpetual mistake of people who condemn me, most respected Pímen: In the first place, I am not always laughing; and,

in the second place, that does not prevent the possibility of relying upon me, which is proved by the flattering confidence which I have more than once enjoyed in your own ranks! I am a man of honour, most respected Pímen!"

Ostrodúmoff muttered something between his teeth, while Pákhlin nodded his head, and repeated, this time without the shadow of a smile:

"No! I am not always laughing! I am not at all a jolly man! Just look at me!"

Ostrodúmoff looked at him.—As a matter of fact, when Pákhlin was not laughing, when he was silent, his face assumed an almost dejected, almost frightened expression; it became amusing, and even malicious, as soon as he opened his mouth. But Ostrodúmoff made no comment.

Again Pákhlin addressed himself to Miss Mashúrin.

"Well, and how are your studies progressing? Are you making a success in your truly humane art? 'T is a difficult job, it strikes me—to aid an inexperienced citizen at his first entrance into God's world."

"'T is nothing; there is no difficulty if he is not much bigger in size than you,"—retorted Miss Mashúrin, who had just passed her examinations as a midwife,—and she indulged in a self-satisfied smile. A year and a half previously, abandoning her family, a family of gentry in the south of Russia, she had come to Petersburg

with six rubles in her pocket; she had entered an obstetrical institution, and by dint of incessant toil, she had obtained the coveted certificate. She was a virgin, ... and a very chaste virgin. "That is nothing remarkable!" some sceptic will say, recalling what has been said about her personal appearance. It is remarkable and rare! we permit ourselves to remark.

On hearing her retort, Pákhlin again burst out laughing.

"You 're a gallant fellow, my dear!"—he exclaimed.—"You have reprimanded me splendidly! I deserved it! Why have I remained such a dwarf? But where has our host vanished to?"

It was not without a purpose that Pákhlin changed the conversation. He could not reconcile himself to his tiny stature, with his ill-favoured figure as a whole. He was the more sensitive on that point because he was passionately fond of women. What would not he have given to find favour in their sight! The consciousness of his miserable exterior preyed upon him far more than his insignificant extraction, than his unenviable social position. Pákhlin's father was a plain burgher, who had served through all sorts of iniquities up to the rank of Titular Councillor, a cunning intermediary in lawsuits, a speculator. He had managed estates and houses, and so had acquired a little money; but he had become

strongly addicted to drink toward the end of his life, and had left nothing after his death. Young Pákhlin (his name was Síla .... Síla Samsónitch[1] —which, also, he regarded as a jeer at himself) had been educated in a Commercial school, where he had learned the German language capitally. After various decidedly heavy trials he had at last obtained a position in a private counting-house, at a salary of fifteen hundred rubles a year. On this money he maintained himself, his invalid aunt, and his hunchbacked sister. At the time of our story he had just entered his twenty-eighth year. Pákhlin was acquainted with a multitude of students, young men who liked him because of his cynical vivacity, the merry bitterness of his self-confident speeches, his one-sided, far from indubitable learning, devoid of pedantry. Only now and then did he suffer at their hands. Once he was late at a political gathering..... On entering, he immediately began to make hurried excuses. . . . "Pákhlin poor is chicken-hearted,"—some one in the corner began to chant,—and all burst out laughing. Pákhlin at last began to laugh himself, although his heart ached. "He has spoken the truth, the rascal!"—he thought to himself. He had made acquaintance with Nezhdánoff at a Greek eating-house, whither he was in

[1] That is, "Strong, son of Samson."—TRANSLATOR.

the habit of going to dine, and where he occasionally gave expression to extremely free and harsh opinions. He asserted that the chief cause of his democratic frame of mind was the bad Greek cookery, which irritated his liver.

"Yes . . . . just so . . . . what has become of our host?"—repeated Pákhlin.—"I notice that, for some time past, he has been in low spirits. Can it be that he is in love—God forbid!"

Miss Mashúrin frowned.

"He went to the library for books,—and he has no time to fall in love, and no one to fall in love with."

"And how about you?" came near bursting from Pákhlin's lips.

"I wish to see him,"—he said aloud,—"because I must have a talk with him about an important affair."

"What affair?"—interposed Ostrodúmoff.—"Our cause?"

"Perhaps it is your cause . . . . that is to say, our cause in general."

Ostrodúmoff snorted. In his secret soul he doubted, but he immediately thought: "But the devil only knows! He 's such a sly dog!"

"Here he comes at last,"—said Miss Mashúrin, suddenly,—and in her small, ugly eyes, riveted on the door of the anteroom, there rose a certain

warm and tender flash, a certain bright, deep, inward spark.

The door opened, and this time, with cap on head and a bundle of books under his arm, there entered a young man of twenty-three—Nezhdánoff himself.

II

At the sight of the visitors in his room, he halted on the threshold, scanned them all, flung aside his cap, dropped his books straight on the floor, and going to the bed, he perched himself on its edge, without uttering a word. His handsome, white face, which seemed still whiter from the dark-red hue of his waving chestnut hair, expressed displeasure and vexation.

Miss Mashúrin turned slightly away and bit her lip; Ostrodúmoff muttered:

"At last!"

Pákhlin was the first to approach Nezhdánoff.

"What 's the matter with thee, Alexyéi Dmítrievitch, the Russian Hamlet? Has any one vexed thee? Or hast thou just got down in the mouth—without any cause?"

"Please stop, thou Russian Mephistopheles," —replied Nezhdánoff, irritably.—"I 'm not in the mood to vie with thee in flat witticisms."

Pákhlin burst into a laugh:

"Thou expressest thyself inaccurately: if it 's witty, it 's not flat; if it 's flat, it 's not witty."

"Well, very good, very good. . . Thou art a wit, everybody knows that."

"And thou art in a nervous condition,"—ejaculated Pákhlin, in jerks.—"Has something actually happened?"

"Nothing in particular has happened;—but it has come to pass that you can't put your nose into the street in this detestable town, in Petersburg, without running up against some triviality, some stupidity, some outrageous injustice, some nonsense or other! It 's impossible to live here any longer."

"That 's exactly why thou hast published in the newspapers that thou wouldst like a place as private tutor, and wert willing to leave town,"—muttered Ostrodúmoff again.

"Of course; with the greatest pleasure I will go away from here! If I could only find a fool who would offer me a place!"

"First thou must discharge thy obligations *here,*"—said Miss Mashúrin, significantly, without ceasing to gaze to one side.

"That is to say?"—inquired Nezhdánoff, turning abruptly round toward her. Miss Mashúrin compressed her lips.

"Ostrodúmoff will tell you."

Nezhdánoff turned to Ostrodúmoff. But the latter merely grunted and cleared his throat, as much as to say, "wait a bit."

"Yes, without jesting, as an actual fact,"—interposed Pákhlin:—"thou hast heard something, something unpleasant!"

Nezhdánoff sprang up from the bed, as though something had exploded beneath him.

"What other unpleasantness would you have?"—he shouted suddenly, in a ringing voice.—"Half Russia is dying of hunger. The *Moscow News* is triumphing, they want to introduce classical studies, they are prohibiting student funds, everywhere there is espionage, oppression, tale-bearing, lying and falsehood—we cannot take a step in any direction . . . and that is not enough for him, he still expects a fresh unpleasantness; he thinks that I am jesting . . . . Basánoff has been arrested,"—he added, lowering his voice somewhat:—"they told me at the library."

Ostrodúmoff and Miss Mashúrin raised their heads simultaneously.

"Dear friend Alexyéi Dmítrievitch,"—began Pákhlin,—"thou art excited—which is easily comprehensible . . . . but hast thou forgotten in what age, and in what country we live?—For, with us, the drowning man must himself fabricate the straw at which he is obliged to clutch!—Where 's the chance to be sentimental under such circumstances? We must learn, brother, how to look the devil straight in the eye, and not get angry, like children. . . ."

"Akh, please, please stop that!"—interrupted Nezhdánoff, sadly, and he even knit his brows, as though in pain.—"Thou art an energetic

man, every one knows that,—thou fearest nothing and no one. . . ."

"I fear no one, don't I?"—Pákhlin was beginning. . . . .

"But who could have betrayed Basánoff?" —went on Nezhdánoff,—"I do not understand!"

"A friend,—of course.—That 's what those fine fellows—friends—are for. Be on your guard with them! For instance,—I had a friend, and he seemed to be a fine man: he was so anxious for me, for my reputation! You see, this is what he used to do: he would come to me: . . . . 'Just imagine,' he would cry: 'what stupid calumny about you has been disseminated: people declare that you poisoned your own uncle,—that you were introduced into a certain house, and you immediately sat down with your back to the hostess—and sat so throughout the evening! And she wept, wept with the affront.—Such nonsense, you know! such folly! What fools could believe it?'—and what happened? A year later I quarrelled with that same friend. . . And he wrote to me, in his farewell letter: 'You, who put your uncle to death!—you, who were not ashamed to insult a respectable lady, by sitting with your back to her!' . . . and so forth, and so on.—That 's what friends are like!"

Ostrodúmoff exchanged glances with Miss Mashúrin.

"Alexyéi Dmítrievitch!"—he clashed out in his heavy bass voice: he was obviously desirous of putting a stop to the eruption of words which had begun: "a letter from Vasíly Nikoláitch has arrived from Moscow."

Nezhdánoff shuddered slightly, and dropped his eyes.

"What does he write?"—he asked at last.

"Why, here . . . . . we and she"—Ostrodúmoff indicated Miss Mashúrin with his eyebrows—"must go."

"What?—she is summoned also?"

"Yes, she also."

"What stands in the way?"

"'T is plain enough what . . . . 't is a question of money."

Nezhdánoff rose from the bed and walked to the window.

"Is much needed?"

"Fifty rubles . . . . Nothing less will do."

Nezhdánoff said nothing.

"I have none at present," he whispered at last, as he drummed on the glass with his fingers, —"but . . . I can get some. Hast thou the letter?"

"The letter? It . . . yes, I have it . . . . . of course . . . . ."

"But why do you conceal everything from me?"—exclaimed Pákhlin.—"Am I not worthy of your confidence?—Even if I were not in com-

plete sympathy . . . with that which you are undertaking,—do you suppose that I am capable of betraying or blabbing?"

"Unintentionally . . . . you might,"—rumbled Ostrodúmoff, in his bass voice.

"Neither intentionally nor unintentionally!—There is Miss Mashúrin staring at me and smiling . . . . but I will tell you . . . . ."

"I 'm not smiling at all,"—said Miss Mashúrin, angrily.

"But I will tell you,"—went on Pákhlin,—"that you, gentlemen, have not a fine scent; that you don't know how to distinguish who are your true friends! A man laughs, and you think he is not serious . . . ."

"And is n't that so, pray?"—said Miss Mashúrin, still angrily.

"Here, now, for instance,"—resumed Pákhlin, with fresh force, this time not even replying to Miss Mashúrin—"you are in need of money . . . and Nezhdánoff has none at present . . . . But I can give it."

Nezhdánoff turned round hastily from the window.

"No . . . no . . . why should you? I will get it . . . . I will get a part of my allowance in advance . . . . . It occurs to my memory that *they* are in debt to me. But see here, Ostrodúmoff, show us that letter."

At first Ostrodúmoff remained impassive for

some time; then he glanced around him; then he rose, bent his whole body forward, and pulling up his trousers, he drew a carefully-folded scrap of blue paper out of the leg of his boot; as he drew it out he blew upon it, for some unknown reason, and handed it to Nezhdánoff.

The latter took the paper, unfolded it, read it through with care, and gave it to Miss Mashúrin. . . . The latter first rose from her chair, then read it also, and returned the paper to Nezhdánoff, although Pákhlin stretched out his hand for it. Nezhdánoff shrugged his shoulders and handed the mysterious letter to Pákhlin. Pákhlin, in his turn, ran his eyes over the paper, and pursing up his lips with great significance, solemnly and softly laid it on the table. Then Ostrodúmoff took it, lighted a large match, which disseminated a powerful odour of sulphur, and having first raised the paper high above his head, as though he were exhibiting it to all present, burned it to ashes on the match, not sparing his own fingers, and flung the ashes into the stove. No one uttered a word, no one even moved during the course of this operation. The eyes of all present were fixed on the floor. Ostrodúmoff wore a concentrated and business-like aspect, Nezhdánoff's face seemed malignant, but Pákhlin displayed an effort; Miss Mashúrin seemed to be celebrating some service of worship.

Two minutes passed thus. . . Then all felt

rather awkward. Pákhlin was the first to feel the necessity of breaking the silence.

"Well, how is it to be?"—he began:—"Is my sacrifice on the altar of the fatherland to be accepted, or not? Am I to be permitted to contribute, if not fifty, at least twenty-five or thirty rubles toward the common enterprise?"

Nezhdánoff suddenly flared up. It seemed as though he were boiling with vexation. . . . . The solemn cremation of the letter had not decreased it,—it had only been awaiting a pretext in order to burst forth.

"I have already told thee that it was not necessary, not necessary. . . not necessary! I will not allow it, I will not accept it. I will get money, I will get it immediately. I need aid from no one!"

"Well, brother,"—said Pákhlin,—"I perceive, although thou art a revolutionist, thou art not a democrat!"

"Say it straight out, that I am an aristocrat!"

"Well, thou really art an aristocrat . . . . to a certain degree."

Nezhdánoff emitted a constrained laugh:

"That is, thou wishest to hint at the fact that I am an illegitimate son. Thou art wasting thy pains in vain, my dear fellow. . . . I do not forget it, even without thy reminding me of it."

Pákhlin wrung his hands.

"For heaven's sake, Alyósha, what is the mat-

ter with thee? How canst thou put such a construction on my words? I do not recognise thee to-day."—Nezhdánoff made an impatient gesture with his head and shoulders.—"Basánoff's arrest has put thee out of sorts; but, seest thou, he behaved himself so incautiously. . . ."

"He did not conceal his convictions,"—put in Miss Mashúrin gloomily:—"it is not our place to condemn him!"

"Yes; only he ought to have kept in mind, also, his friends, whom he may now compromise."

"Why do you assume that of him? . . ." rumbled Ostrodúmoff, in his turn:—"Basánoff is a man of steadfast character; he will not betray any one. And as for lack of caution . . . . do you know what? Not every one possesses the gift of being cautious, Mr. Pákhlin!"

Pákhlin took offence, and was on the point of retorting, but Nezhdánoff stopped him.

"O Lord!"—he exclaimed,—"do me a favour: let 's drop politics for a time."

A silence ensued.

"I met Skoropíkhin to-day,"—remarked Pákhlin, at last,—"our All-Russia critic, and æsthetic and enthusiast. What an intolerable creature! He 's forever seething and frothing, exactly like a bottle of wretched sour-cabbage beer . . . . The waiter, in his flight, has stuffed his finger into it in place of the cork; a fat raisin has got stranded in the neck,—it keeps on

bubbling and hissing,—and when all the froth has flown out of it, at the bottom there will remain at most a few drops of vile liquid, which not only slakes no one's thirst, but merely causes a colic. . . . . A very deleterious individual for young folks!"

The comparison employed by Pákhlin, although true and accurate, did not evoke a smile on the face of any one. Ostrodúmoff alone remarked that there was no need to pity young folks who were capable of taking an interest in æsthetics, even if Skoropíkhin did lead them astray.

"But, good gracious, stop!"—exclaimed Pákhlin with heat; the less sympathy he encountered, the more fervent did he become:—"let us assume that is not a political question, but still one of importance. If you listen to Skoropíkhin, every ancient artistic production is good for nothing, from the very fact that it is ancient. . . . But in that case, art, the arts in general, are nothing but a fashion—and it is not worth while to talk seriously about them. If there is nothing stable about them, nothing eternal,—then the devil take them! In science, in mathematics, for example: you do not consider Euler, Laplace, Gauss as antiquated triflers? You are ready to recognise their authority, but Raphael and Mozart are fools? And your pride rises in rebellion against their authority? The laws of art are

more difficult to grasp than the laws of science. . . . I agree, but they exist; and he who does not perceive them is blind; voluntarily or involuntarily, it makes no difference!"

Pákhlin relapsed into silence . . . . and no one uttered a word, just as though they had all filled their mouths with water—as though they were all rather ashamed of him. Ostrodúmoff alone muttered:

"And nevertheless, I do not in the least commiserate those young people whom Skoropíkhin leads astray."

"Well now, I wash my hands of you!" thought Pákhlin. "I 'm going!"

He had come to Nezhdánoff with the object of imparting to him his ideas concerning the transmission from abroad of the *Polar Star* (the *Bell*[1] no longer existed)—but the conversation had taken such a turn that it was better not to raise that question. Pákhlin had already taken up his hat, when suddenly, without any preliminary noise or knock, there resounded from the anteroom a remarkably agreeable, manly, and rich baritone voice, the very sound of which exhaled some unusually noble, well-bred, and even fragrant element.

"Is Mr. Nezhdánoff at home?"

"Yes,"—replied Nezhdánoff, at last.

[1] Alexander Hertzen's famous revolutionary journal, published abroad and regularly smuggled into Russia.—TRANSLATOR.

The door opened discreetly and smoothly, and slowly removing a shiny hat from his comely, closely-clipped head, a man about forty years of age, of lofty stature, stately and majestic, entered the room. Dressed in a very handsome cloth paletot with a beaver collar, although the month of April was already drawing to its close —he stunned them all, Nezhdánoff, Pákhlin, even Miss Mashúrin . . . even Ostrodúmoff!— with the elegant self-confidence of his carriage and the amiable composure of his greeting. All involuntarily rose to their feet on his appearance.

III

The elegant man approached Nezhdánoff and, with a benevolent smile, remarked: "I have already had the pleasure of meeting you, and even of conversing with you, Mr. Nezhdánoff, day before yesterday, if you will be good enough to recall it—in the theatre." (The visitor paused, as though waiting; Nezhdánoff bowed his head slightly, and nodded.)—"Yes! . . . and to-day I have presented myself to you in consequence of the advertisement which you put in the newspapers. I should like to have a talk with you, if I shall not be in the way of the ladies and gentlemen present. . . ." (The visitor bowed to Miss Mashúrin, and waved his hand, clad in a greyish glove of undressed kid, in the direction of Pákhlin and Ostrodúmoff)—"and if I do not disturb them. . . . ."

"No . . . . why should you? . . . ." replied Nezhdánoff, not without an effort.—"These gentlemen will permit . . . . Will you not be seated?"

The visitor made a pleasant inclination, and amiably grasping the back of a chair, drew it toward him, but did not sit down,—as every one in the room was standing,—but merely cast his brilliant though half-closed eyes around.

"Good-bye, Alexyéi Dmítritch,"—said Miss Mashúrin suddenly:—"I will come in later."

"So will I,"—added Ostrodúmoff.—"I also . . . . will see you later."

Avoiding the visitor, and as though by way of defying him, Miss Mashúrin grasped Nezhdánoff's hand, gave it a hearty shake, and left the room without bowing to any one. Ostrodúmoff followed her, clumping unnecessarily with his boots, and even snorting a couple of times, as much as to say: "Take that, thou beaver collar!" The visitor followed the two with a polite, rather curious glance. Then he fixed it on Pákhlin, as though expecting that he, also, would follow the example of the two visitors who had withdrawn; but Pákhlin, on whose countenance, from the very moment of the visitor's appearance, a peculiar, restrained smile had dawned, stepped aside and took refuge in a corner. Then the visitor seated himself on the chair. Nezhdánoff also sat down.

"My name is Sipyágin; perhaps you have heard it,"—began the visitor, with proud modesty.

But first we must narrate in what manner Nezhdánoff had met him at the theatre.

On the occasion of Sadóvsky's arrival from Moscow, Ostróvsky's play, "Shoemaker, Stick to Your Last," [1] had been given. The part of

[1] Literally, "Don't seat yourself in any one's sledge but your own."—TRANSLATOR.

Rusakóff was, as every one knows, one of the famous actor's favourite rôles. Before dinner Nezhdánoff went to the theatre office, where he found a good many people assembled. He was preparing to buy a ticket for the pit;—but, at the moment when he stepped up to the opening of the office, an officer who stood behind him shouted to the ticket-seller, pushing three rubles over Nezhdánoff's head: "He" (meaning Nezhdánoff) "will probably have to get change—but I do not need it:—so please give me, as quickly as possible, a seat in the first row. . . . I 'm in a hurry!"—"Excuse me, Mr. Officer,"—said Nezhdánoff, in a sharp voice,—"I myself wish to buy a seat in the first row,"—and thereupon he flung into the little window, a three-ruble note—his entire cash capital. The ticket-seller gave him his ticket; and, in the evening, Nezhdánoff found himself in the aristocratic section of the Alexandra Theatre.

He was badly dressed, devoid of gloves, in unblacked boots—he felt confused, and was vexed with himself for having that feeling. Beside him, on the right, sat a general, besprinkled with stars;—on the left, that same elegant gentleman, Privy Councillor Sipyágin, whose appearance, two days later, had so excited Miss Mashúrin and Ostrodúmoff. The general glanced at Nezhdánoff from time to time as at something indecent, unexpected, and even insulting; Si-

pyágin, on the contrary, cast at him glances which, although sidelong, were not hostile.—All the persons who surrounded Nezhdánoff seemed, in the first place, to be personages rather than persons; in the second place, they were all very well acquainted with one another, and exchanged brief conversations, remarks, or even simple exclamations and greetings—some of them, even, over Nezhdánoff's head; but he sat motionless and awkward in his seat,—like a regular pariah. He felt bitter and ashamed and wretched in soul; he derived very little enjoyment from Ostróvsky's comedy and from Sadóvsky's acting. And, all at once, oh marvel! during one of the intermissions between the acts, his neighbour on the left—not the star-bestudded general, but the other, who had no insignia of distinction on his breast—politely and softly entered into conversation with him, with a sort of insinuating condescension. He began to talk about Ostróvsky's piece, desiring to learn from Nezhdánoff,—as from "one of the representatives of the rising generation,"—what was his opinion regarding it. Astounded, almost frightened, Nezhdánoff answered abruptly and in monosyllables, at first .... his heart even began to beat violently; but afterward, he was vexed with himself; why was he so agitated by it? Was not he just as much of a man as all the rest of them? And he began to set forth his opinion, without embarrassment,

without reserve, and, at last, so loudly, and with such enthusiasm, that he evidently disturbed his star-bestudded neighbour. Nezhdánoff was an ardent admirer of Ostróvsky;—but, notwithstanding all his respect for the talent displayed by the author in his comedy, "Shoemaker, Stick to Your Last," he could not approve of the very evident desire contained therein, to ridicule civilisation in the caricatured personage Víkhoreff.—His courteous neighbour listened to him with attention, with sympathy; and, at the following intermission, he again entered into conversation with him, but this time not about Ostróvsky's comedy, but in a general way, about various worldly, scientific, and even political topics. Obviously, he was interested in his young and eloquent interlocutor. Nezhdánoff, as before, not only did not stand on ceremony, but even put on more steam, as the expression runs. "If you ask questions—here goes!" What he aroused in his neighbour the general was no longer mere uneasiness, but wrath and suspicion. At the conclusion of the play, Sipyágin bade farewell to Nezhdánoff in a very affectionate manner—but did not ask his name, and did not mention his own. While waiting for his carriage on the staircase, he encountered a good friend of his, Imperial-Adjutant Prince G.—"I was watching thee from my box,"—the prince said to him, laughing lightly through his perfumed mous-

tache:—"dost thou know with whom thou wert talking?"—"No, I don't know! dost thou?"—"He was n't a stupid young fellow, was he, hey?"—"Very far from stupid: who is he?"—Then the prince bent down to his ear and whispered in French:—"My brother. Yes; he is my brother. He is my father's illegitimate son . . . he is called Nezhdánoff. I 'll tell thee about it some day. . . . My father did not expect it in the least, so he named him Nezhdánoff.[1] But he arranged his fate for him . . . *il lui a fait un sort.* . . . We pay him a pension. That young man has a head . . . and, by my father's kindness, he has received a good education. Only he has got entirely off the track; he 's a republican, or something of that sort. . . . We do not receive him. . . . *Il est impossible!* But goodbye, they are calling my carriage."—The prince departed, and on the following day Sipyágin read in the *Police News* the advertisement which Nezhdánoff had inserted—and went to him. . . .

"My name is Sipyágin,"—he said to Nezhdánoff, as he sat in front of him on a straw-bottomed chair, and surveyed him with his impressive gaze:—"I learned from the newspapers that you wish to secure a place as tutor, and I have come to you with the following proposition. I am married; I have one son—nine years of age. The boy is extremely gifted—I will say that

[1] "The Unexpected."—TRANSLATOR.

frankly. We spend the greater part of the summer and autumn in the country, in the Government of S. . . . , five miles from the governmental capital. So here now: would you like to go thither with us for the vacation, to teach my son the Russian language and history—the subjects which you mention in your advertisement? I venture to think that you will be satisfied with me, with my family, and with the location of my manor-house. There is a very fine park, a river, good air, a spacious house. . . . Do you accept? In that case, all that remains is to inquire your terms, although I do not suppose,"—added Sipyágin with a slight grimace,—"that any difficulties will arise between us on that score."

All the while that Sipyágin was talking Nezhdánoff stared intently at him, at his small head, which was thrown somewhat backward, at his low, narrow, but intelligent brow, his thin, Roman nose, his pleasant eyes, his regular lips, from which the gracious speech flowed smoothly, at his long side-whiskers, which drooped after the English fashion—stared and wondered.—"What 's the meaning of this?" he thought. "Why is this man fairly paying court to me? This aristocrat—and I!—How did we come together? And what has brought him to me?"

He was so immersed in his own reflections that he did not even open his mouth, when Sipyágin,

at the conclusion of his speech, relapsed into silence, awaiting an answer. Sipyágin darted a glance at the corner where Pákhlin had taken refuge, and was devouring him with his eyes in a manner quite equal to that of Nezhdánoff—as much as to say, "Is not the presence of this third person keeping Nezhdánoff from speaking out?"—Sipyágin elevated his eyebrows, as though submitting to the strangeness of the surroundings into which he had stumbled, by his own volition, however,—and following his brows he elevated his voice and repeated his question.

Nezhdánoff gave a start.

"Of course,"—he began, somewhat hurriedly;—"I . . . . accept . . . with pleasure . . . although I must confess . . . that I cannot avoid feeling some surprise . . . as I have no recommendations . . . and, moreover, the very opinions which I expressed to you day before yesterday in the theatre ought rather to deter you. . . . ."

"On that point you are entirely mistaken, my dear Alexyéi . . . Alexyéi Dmítritch! I believe that is your name,"—remarked Sipyágin, displaying his teeth.—"I, I venture to say, am known as a man of liberal, progressive convictions; and, on the contrary, your opinions, setting aside everything about them which is peculiar to youth, which is inclined—do not take offence!—to a certain exaggeration,—those opinions of yours are not in the least antagonistic to my own

—and they even please me by their youthful fervour!"

Sipyágin talked without the slightest hesitation: his round, fluent speech flowed like honey on oil.

"My wife shares my manner of thought,"—he went on:—"her views more nearly resemble yours, perhaps, than they do mine; that is easily comprehensible: she is younger!—When, the other day, after our meeting, I read in the newspaper your name, which, I will remark, by-the-bye, contrary to general custom, was published, along with your address (I had already learned your name in the theatre), then . . it . . . that fact impressed me, I perceived in it—in that coincidence—a certain—pardon the superstition of the expression—a certain finger of Fate, so to speak!—You have alluded to recommendations; but I require no recommendations.—Your appearance, your personality arouse my sympathy. That is enough for me. I have become accustomed to trust my eye. So—may I hope? You accept?"

"I do . . . . of course . . . . ." replied Nezhdánoff —"and I shall endeavour to justify your confidence.—Only, permit me to warn you, now, of one thing: I am ready to be your son's tutor, but not his governor. I am not capable of that—and I do not care to enslave myself; I will not deprive myself of my freedom."

Sipyágin lightly waved his hand in the air, as though chasing away a fly.

"Be at your ease, my dearest fellow. . . . You are not of the flour from which governors are baked;—and I do not want a governor. I am seeking a teacher—and I have found him. Well, and how about the terms—the pecuniary terms—the loathsome coin?"

Nezhdánoff made an effort to say something. . . .

"Listen,"—said Sipyágin, bending his whole body forward, and touching Nezhdánoff's knee with the tips of his fingers in a caressing manner: —"among well-bred people such questions are settled in two words. I offer you one hundred rubles a month; your travelling expenses there and back are, of course, paid by me.—Do you accept?"

Again Nezhdánoff flushed crimson.

"That is a great deal more than I had intended to ask . . . . because . . . I . . . ."

"Very good, very good indeed . . . ." interrupted Sipyágin. . "I look upon this matter as settled . . . and on you—as a member of my family."—He rose from his chair, and suddenly grew very jolly and florid of manner, exactly as though he had received a gift. In all his movements a certain pleasant familiarity and even sportiveness made its appearance.

"We shall set out in a few days,"—he said,

in a free-and-easy tone:—"I love to welcome the spring in the country, although, by the nature of my occupation, I am a prosaic man, and chained to the town. . . . And therefore, permit me to consider your first month as beginning with to-day. My wife and son are already in Moscow. She has gone on ahead. We shall find them in the country . . . . in the lap of nature. You and I will travel together . . . . as bachelors . . . . he,he!"—Sipyágin laughed coquettishly and abruptly through his nose.—"And now . . . ."

He pulled out of the pocket of his overcoat a silver pocket-book enamelled in black, and drew thence a card.

"This is my present address.—Drop in—say to-morrow. That 's it . . . about twelve o'clock. We will discuss the matter further. I will make known to you certain ideas of mine in regard to education. . . . Well—and we will decide upon the day of our departure."—Sipyágin shook Nezhdánoff's hand.—"And do you know what?" he added, lowering his voice and tilting his head on one side:—"If you require an advance payment . . . . Please do not stand on ceremony! take a month's salary in advance, if you like."

Nezhdánoff simply did not know what reply to make; and with the same bewilderment as before, he gazed at the bright, courteous, and, at the same time, unfamiliar face which had ap-

proached so close to his own and was smiling at him in so gracious a manner.

"You do not need it—hey?" whispered Sipyágin.

"If you will allow me, I will tell you that to-morrow,"—articulated Nezhdánoff, at last.

"Capital! So—farewell for the present! Until to-morrow!"—Sipyágin released Nezhdánoff's hand, and was on the point of withdrawing.....

"Permit me to ask you,"—said Nezhdánoff, suddenly,—"you have just told me that you learned my name in the theatre.—From whom did you learn it?"

"From whom?—Why, from one of your intimate acquaintances—and, apparently, a kinsman of yours—Prince . . . . Prince G."

"The Imperial-Adjutant?"

"Yes, from him."

Nezhdánoff turned scarlet—worse than before—and opened his mouth . . . but said nothing. Again Sipyágin shook his hand—only in silence this time—and, bowing first to him and then to Pákhlin, put on his hat just as he reached the door, and went out, wearing on his face a self-satisfied smile; it expressed a consciousness of the profound impression which his visit must have produced.

IV

Before Sipyágin had fairly crossed the threshold, Pákhlin sprang from his chair, and rushing at Nezhdánoff began to congratulate him.

"What a sturgeon thou hast hooked!"—he kept repeating, snickering and kicking his feet about.—"Why, dost thou know who that is? The famous Sipyágin, Gentleman of the Imperial Bedchamber—in a certain sense, a pillar of society, a future Minister!"

"He is totally unknown to me,"—said Nezhdánoff gruffly.

Pákhlin made a gesture of despair.

"That 's the trouble with us, Alexyéi Dmítritch, that we know no one! We want to act, we want to turn the whole world upside down, but we live apart from that same world, we associate only with two or three friends, we grind round and round in one spot, in a narrow circle. . . ."

"Excuse me," interposed Nezhdánoff: "that is not true. We only decline to make acquaintance with our enemies; but with persons of our own stamp, with the masses, we enter into constant relations."

"Stop, stop, stop, stop!"—interrupted Pá-

khlin, in his turn.—" In the first place, as to our enemies, permit me to recall to your mind Goethe's verse:

> Wer den Dichter will versteh'n
> Muss im Dichter's Lande geh'n . . .

—and I say:

> Wer die *Feinde* will versteh'n
> Muss im *Feindes* lande geh'n. . .

It is stupid to avoid one's enemies, not to know their habits and manner of life;—Stu . . pid! . . . Yes, yes! If I wish to shoot a wolf in the forest I must know his lairs. . . . In the second place, you just said, ' We enter into relations with the masses.' . . . My dear soul!—In 1862 the Poles went off ' to the forest '—and now we are going off into the same forest, that is to say, the masses of the people, which for us are as dense and dark as any forest! "

" Well, then, and what is to be done, according to thy opinion? "

" The Indians fling themselves under the wheels of Juggernaut,"—continued Pákhlin, gloomily;—" it crushes them, and they die—in bliss.—We, also, have a Juggernaut of our own. . . It certainly crushes us, but it affords us no bliss."

" So, then, what is to be done, in thy opinion? " —repeated Nezhdánoff, almost in a shout.

"Write novels with a tendency?—is that what thou meanest?"

Pákhlin flung his hands apart and lolled his head on his left shoulder.

"Thou mightest write novels—in any case—as thou possessest the literary vein. . . . Come, don't get angry, I won't do it again! I know thou dost not like to have people refer to that; but I agree with thee: to compose such things, 'with stuffing,' and with new-fangled twists and turns: 'Akh! I love you! she *ran up* . . .' 'It makes no difference to me, he *scratched!*'—is anything but a cheerful matter!—Therefore, I repeat: get into close relations with all classes, beginning with the highest! You cannot place your whole reliance on Ostrodúmoffs! They are honest, fine people—but, on the other hand, they are stupid! stupid! Just look at our friend. The very soles of his boots are not the sort that clever people have. Why, for instance, did he leave here a while ago?—He did not wish to remain in the same room, to breathe the same air with an aristocrat!"

"I must request thee not to express thyself in that manner concerning Ostrodúmoff, in my presence,"—Nezhdánoff caught him up vehemently.—"He wears thick boots, because they are cheap."

"I did not mean it in that sense,"—Pákhlin was beginning. . . .

"If he does not wish to remain in the same room with an aristocrat,"—went on Nezhdánoff, raising his voice,—"I laud him for that;—but the chief thing of all is: he will know how to sacrifice himself—and, if necessary, he will go to his death, which is something that thou and I will never do!"

Pákhlin made a wry face, and pointed at his thin, deformed little legs.

"How can I contend, my friend, Alexyéi Dmítritch!—Good gracious! But setting all that aside . . . . . I repeat: I am heartily glad of thine acquaintance with Mr. Sipyágin—and I even foresee great benefit from that acquaintance—for our affair. Thou wilt get into the higher circles! Thou wilt see those 'lionesses,' those women with bodies of velvet on steel springs, as it is expressed in 'Letters from Spain'; study them, brother, study them! If thou wert an epicurean, I should even be apprehensive on thy account . . . I really should!—But surely thou art not taking a position as tutor with that aim in view?"

"I am taking a position as tutor,"—put in Nezhdánoff,—"in order to avoid starvation . . . And in order to get away from all of you for a time,"—he added to himself.

"Well, of course! of course!—Therefore, I say to thee: study! But what an odour that gentleman has left behind him!" Pákhlin elevated

his nose in the air.—"That 's it, the genuine 'ambray' of which the lady's-maid in 'The Inspector' dreamed!"

"He questioned Prince G. . . about me,"—said Nezhdánoff, in a dull tone, again huddling himself in the window:—"my entire history must be known to him, by this time."

"Not 'must be,' but—certainly is! What of that?—I 'll bet you, that that is the very reason why he took it into his head to engage thee as teacher. Say what thou wilt, thou art certainly an aristocrat thyself—by blood. Well, and that is as much as to say: thine own master! But I have stayed too long with thee; it is high time I went to my office, to the exploiters!—Farewell for the present, brother!"

Pákhlin started for the door, but halted, and turned back.

"Hearken, Alyósha,"—he said, in an insinuating tone:—"a while ago, thou didst refuse me,—now thou wilt have money of thine own, I know, but nevertheless, allow me to contribute at least a trifle to the general cause!—I can aid in no other way, than through my pocket! See here: I place a ten-ruble note on the table! Is it accepted?"

Nezhdánoff made no reply, and did not move.

"Silence gives consent! Thanks!"—cried Pákhlin merrily, and vanished.

Nezhdánoff was left alone. . . . . He con-

tinued to stare through the window-pane at the gloomy, contracted courtyard, into which the rays even of the summer sun did not fall, and his face was gloomy also.

Nezhdánoff was born, as we already know, of Prince G., wealthy, an Imperial-Adjutant, and his daughter's governess, a pretty little graduate from a Government Institute school, who died on the day she gave him birth. Nezhdánoff had received his first education in the boarding-school of a Swiss, an active, severe pedagogue, and then he had entered the University. He himself had desired to become a jurist:—but the general, his father, who hated the nihilists, had set him at work "on æsthetics," as Nezhdánoff expressed it, with a bitter smile, that is to say, in the historico-philological course. Nezhdánoff's father saw him at most three or four times a year, but he took an interest in his fate—and, when he died, bequeathed him—"in memory of Nástenka" (his mother)—a capital of six thousand rubles, the interest on which, under the title of "pension," was paid to him by his brothers, the Princes G.—It was not for nothing that Pákhlin had called him an aristocrat; everything about him betrayed his high breeding: his small ears, hands, feet, his rather small but delicate features, his soft skin, his soft, abundant hair, his very voice, which was rather lisping but agreeable. He was frightfully nervous, frightfully egotis-

tical, impressionable, and even capricious; the false position, in which he had been placed from his very childhood, had developed in him quickness to take offence, and irritability; but innate magnanimity did not permit of his becoming suspicious and distrustful.—That same false position of Nezhdánoff also explains the contradictions which contended in his being. Neat to spruceness, squeamish to fastidiousness, he strove to be cynical, and coarse in language; an idealist by nature, passionate and chaste, bold and timid at one and the same time, he was ashamed, as of a disgraceful vice, both of his passion and his chastity, and regarded it as his duty to jeer at ideals. He had a tender heart, and avoided people; he easily flew into a rage—and never cherished rancour. He was indignant with his father, because the latter had set him to work "at æsthetics": he openly, in the sight of all men, busied himself exclusively with political and socialistic problems, professed the most extreme opinions—(in him, they were not mere phrases!)—and secretly enjoyed art, poetry, beauty in all its manifestations . . . . he even wrote verses himself. He carefully hid the notebook, in which he had transcribed them—and among his Petersburg friends, Pákhlin alone, and that owing to his fine scent, suspected its existence. Nothing so offended, so insulted Nezhdánoff, as the slightest allusion to his verse-

writing, to this, as he regarded it, his unpardonable weakness. Thanks to his Swiss teacher, he knew a multitude of facts, and was not afraid of toil; he even liked to work in a somewhat feverish and inconsequent manner, to tell the truth.—His comrades loved him . . . they were attracted by his inward uprightness and kindliness and purity; but Nezhdánoff had not been born under a lucky star; he did not find life easy.

He himself was profoundly conscious of this—and he recognised that he was solitary, despite the attachment of his friends.

He continued to stand in front of the window—and reflected sadly and painfully about his impending journey, about the new, unexpected crisis in his fate. . . . He did not regret Petersburg; he was not leaving behind him there anything especially dear to him; moreover, he knew that he was to return in the autumn. And, nevertheless, he was beset with irresolution; he experienced an involuntary dejection.

"What sort of a teacher am I?" flashed through his mind; —"what sort of a pedagogue?"—He was ready to reproach himself for having accepted the duties of an instructor. Nevertheless, such a reproach would have been unjust.—Nezhdánoff possessed sufficient knowledge—and, in spite of his uneven temper, children came to him without constraint—and he himself easily became attached to them. The

melancholy which had seized upon Nezhdánoff was that sensation peculiar to every change of place—a sensation which is experienced by all persons of melancholy temperament, all meditative people; it is not known to persons of dashing, sanguine character; they are, rather, ready to rejoice when the every-day course of life is broken, when its habitual surroundings are changed. Nezhdánoff became engrossed in his thoughts to such a degree that gradually, unconsciously, he began to put them into words; the emotions which were fermenting within him were already ranging themselves in measured cadence. . . . .

"Phew! the devil!" he cried aloud.—"Apparently, I am on the verge of composing verses!"—He gave a start, and retreated from the window; catching sight of Pákhlin's ten-ruble note, which lay on the table, he stuffed it into his pocket, and set to striding up and down the room.

"I must take some earnest-money,"—he argued with himself . . . "seeing that the gentleman offers it.—One hundred rubles . . . and from my brothers—from their Serenities,—one hundred rubles. . . . . Fifty for my debt, fifty or seventy for the journey . . . . and the rest can go to Ostrodúmoff. And here, too, what Pákhlin has given, he can have that also. . . . ."

While he was casting up these accounts in his

head—the former rhymes began again to stir within him. He paused, meditated . . . . and, turning his eyes to one side, he became rooted to the spot. . . . . Then his hands, as though guided by the sense of feeling, sought and opened the drawer of his table, drew forth from its very innermost depths a closely-written note-book. . . . . .

He dropped into a chair, still never altering the direction of his gaze, took a pen, and purring to himself, now and then tossing back his hair, erasing, blotting, he began to jot down line after line. . . . .

The door of the anteroom was opened half-way—and Miss Mashúrin's head made its appearance. Nezhdánoff did not notice it, and went on with his work. Miss Mashúrin stared long and intently at him—and, shaking her head to right and left, beat a retreat. . . . But Nezhdánoff suddenly straightened himself up, glanced round, and saying, with vexation:

"Ah! You!"—flung the note-book into the table-drawer.

Then Miss Mashúrin entered the room, with a firm tread.

"Ostrodúmoff has sent me to you,"—she said, hesitatingly,—"in order to find out when he can have the money.—If you obtain it to-day, we will set out this evening."

"It is impossible to get it to-day,"—rejoined

Nezhdánoff, and knit his brows:—"come tomorrow."

"At what time?"

"At two o'clock."

"Very well."

Miss Mashúrin said nothing for a while, then suddenly offered her hand to Nezhdánoff. . . .

"I seem to have disturbed you; pardon me. And besides . . . . I am going away. Who knows whether we shall see each other again? I wished to bid you farewell."

Nezhdánoff pressed her red, cold fingers.

"You saw that gentleman here?"—he began. —"He and I have come to terms. I am going with him as tutor. His estate is in the Government of S., near S. itself."

A joyful smile flashed over Miss Mashúrin's face.

"Near S.! Then, perhaps, we shall see each other again. Perhaps we shall be sent thither." —Miss Mashúrin sighed.—"Akh, Alexyéi Dmítritch. . . . . ."

"What?"—asked Nezhdánoff.

Miss Mashúrin assumed a concentrated mien.

"Never mind.—Farewell! It is nothing."

Again she pressed Nezhdánoff's hand firmly, and withdrew.

"There is no other person in all Petersburg, who is so attached to me as that . . . . . queer woman!" thought Nezhdánoff to himself. "But

why on earth did she disturb me? . . However, it is all for the best!"

On the morning of the following day, Nezhdánoff betook himself to Sipyágin's city residence, and there, in a magnificent study, filled with furniture of a severe style, which fully accorded with the dignity of a liberal statesman and gentleman, seated in front of a huge desk, on which, in stately order, lay documents of no use whatever, along with gigantic paper-knives of ivory, which had never cut anything,—he, for the space of a whole hour, listened to the free-thinking host, was drenched with the oil of his wise, affable, gracious speeches, received, at last, one hundred rubles as earnest-money, and, ten days later, that same Nezhdánoff, half-reclining on a velvet divan, in a special compartment of a first-class railway carriage, side by side with that same wise, liberal statesman and gentleman, was whirling on toward Moscow over the jolting rails of the Nicholas railway.

V

In the drawing-room of a large stone house, with columns and a Grecian façade, built in the twenties of the nineteenth century, by the well-known agriculturist and "Danteist,"[1] Sipyágin's father, his wife, Valentína Mikhaílovna, a very handsome lady, was every moment expecting the arrival of her husband, which had been announced by a telegram.—The furnishing of the drawing-room bore the imprint of the newest, most delicate taste; everything in it was pretty and pleasing, everything, from the agreeable variety of the cretonne coverings and draperies to the diversified outlines of the porcelain, bronze, and crystal trifles scattered about on the étagères and tables, everything stood out softly and harmoniously, and mingled with the merry rays of the May day, which streamed freely through the windows that had been set ajar. The air of the drawing-room, permeated with the fragrance of lilies-of-the-valley (large bouquets of those wondrously-beautiful spring flowers gleamed white here and there)—barely stirred, now and then agitated by the entrance of

[1] The epithet applied to the landed proprietors who (before the Emancipation) were accustomed to torture their serfs.—Translator.

a light breeze, which circled softly over the superbly laid-out garden.

A charming picture! And the mistress of the house, Valentína Mikhaílovna Sipyágin, completed the picture, imparted to it sense and life. She was a woman of lofty stature, thirty years of age, with dark chestnut hair, with a dark but fresh face of uniform hue, which reminded one of the countenance of the Sistine Madonna, and wonderful, deep, velvety eyes.—Her lips were rather broad and pale, her shoulders rather high, her hands rather large. . . . . But, in spite of all this, any one who had beheld her, as she moved freely and gracefully about the drawing-room, now bending over the flowers her slender, slightly laced figure, and inhaling their odour with a smile, now altering the position of some Chinese vase, now swiftly adjusting, in front of the mirror, her shining hair, and slightly narrowing her marvellous eyes,—any one, we say, would have exclaimed, to himself or even aloud, that he had never encountered so bewitching a creature!

A pretty, curly-haired little boy, nine years of age, in a Scottish costume, with his little legs bare, lavishly pomaded and curled, ran headlong into the drawing-room, and came to a sudden halt at the sight of Valentína Mikhaílovna.

"What dost thou want, Kólya?"—she asked.—Her voice was as soft and velvety as her eyes.

"This is what I want, mamma,"—began the

little boy, with embarrassment,—" aunty sent me here . . . . she ordered me to bring her some lilies-of-the-valley . . . . for her room . . . she has none. . . . "

Valentína Mikhaílovna took her little son by the chin, and raised his pomaded head.

" Tell aunty, that she must send to the gardener for lilies-of-the-valley;—but these lilies belong to me. . . I do not wish to have them touched. Tell her, that I do not like to have my rules broken. Wilt thou be able to repeat my words? "

" Yes," . . . . whispered the boy.

" Come, now—say them over."

" I shall say . . . . I shall say . . . that thou wilt not let her."

Valentína Mikhaílovna broke into a laugh.—And her laugh, also, was soft.

" I perceive that one cannot yet intrust any commissions to thee. Well, it makes no difference, say whatever comes into thy head."

The little boy bestowed a swift kiss on his mother's hand, all adorned with rings, and flew headlong thence.

Valentína Mikhaílovna followed him with her eyes, sighed, approached a cage of gilded wire, along whose walls, cautiously clutching with beak and claws, a small green parrakeet was climbing, and teased him with the tip of her finger; then she sank down on a small, low couch,

and taking from a small, round, carved table, the last number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*,—she began to turn over the leaves.

A respectful cough made her look up. On the threshold of the door, stood a comely footman, in a livery coat, and white necktie.

"What dost thou want,—Agafón?" inquired Valentína Mikhaílovna, in the same soft voice as before.

"Semyón Petróvitch Kallomyeítzeff has arrived, madam. Will you receive him?"

"Ask him in; ask him in, of course.—And tell them to request Marianna Vikéntievna to come to the drawing-room."

Valentína Mikhaílovna flung the number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* on the table,—and, leaning against the back of the divan—rolled her eyes upward, and fell into meditation,—which was very becoming to her.

From the manner alone in which Semyón Petróvitch Kallomyeítzeff, a young man, two and thirty years of age, entered the room,—unconstrainedly, carelessly and wearily,—from the fact that, of a sudden, his face brightened up pleasantly, and he made his bow, a little to one side, and from the elastic manner in which he drew himself up afterward, from the manner in which he talked, not exactly through his nose, and yet not quite sweetly,—from the respectful way in which he took, the impressive way in

which he kissed, Valentína Mikhaílovna's hand,—any one could have divined, that the newly-arrived visitor was not a resident of the rural districts, not a rural, accidental, although wealthy neighbour, but a genuine Petersburg "fashionable" of the highest circles.—Moreover, he was clad in the very best English fashion: the flowered tip of his white batiste handkerchief stuck out, in a tiny triangle, from the flat side-pocket of his variegated jacket; from a rather broad black ribbon dangled a monocle; the dead-white hue of his suède gloves corresponded with the dead-grey colouring of his checked trousers. Mr. Kallomyeítzeff's hair was closely cut, he was smoothly shaved; his somewhat feminine face, with its small eyes set close together, with its thin, hooked nose, and its plump, red lips, expressed the agreeable license of the highly-educated nobleman. It exhaled courtesy . . . and very easily became malicious, even harsh; all that was required was that some one or something should vex Semyón Petróvitch, should wound his conservative, patriotic and religious principles,—oh! then he became pitiless! All his elegance instantaneously evaporated:—his tender eyes lighted up with an evil flame:—his handsome little mouth emitted ugly words—and appealed—with a shriek appealed to the authorities!

Semyón Petróvitch's family was descended from plain market-gardeners. His great-grand-

father had been called, after the place of his extraction: Koloméntzoff. . . But his grandfather had changed himself into Koloméitzeff; his father had written it: Kalloméitzeff, and finally, Semyón Petróvitch, had inserted the character *ye* in the place of *e,* and seriously regarded himself as a pure-blooded aristocrat; he was even wont to hint, that their family was really descended from the Barons Gallemeyer, one of whom had been an Austrian field-marshal in the Thirty Years' War. Semyón Petróvitch served in the Ministry of the Court, had the post of Junior Gentleman of the Imperial Bedchamber; patriotism prevented his entering the diplomatic career, where, it appeared, he was constantly being summoned; and his education, his habit of society, his success with women, and his very appearance . . . *mais quitter la Russie?—jamais!* —Kallomyeítzeff possessed a fine property, had influential connections; he bore the reputation of a trustworthy and devoted man—*" un peu trop . . . féodal dans ses opinions,"* as the well-known Prince B., one of the lights of the Petersburg official world, expressed himself with regard to him. Kallomyeítzeff had come to the Government of S. . . . on a two months' leave of absence, in order to attend to matters on his estate—that is, " to frighten some, to crush down others." —For it is impossible to dispense with that!

" I supposed that I should find Borís Andréitch

here,"—he began, shifting amiably from one foot to the other, and suddenly glancing aside, in imitation of a very important personage.

Valentína Mikhaílovna slightly knit her brows:

"Otherwise you would not have come?"

Kallomyeítzeff fairly flung himself backward, so unjust did Madame Sipyágin's question appear to him, and so absolutely absurd!

"Valentína Mikhaílovna!"—he exclaimed,—"upon my word, is it possible to suspect . . . ."

"Very well, very well, sit down; Borís Andréitch will be here directly. I have sent the calash to the station for him. Wait a little. . . . You will see him. What time is it now?"

"Half-past two,"—replied Kallomyeítzeff, drawing from his waistcoat pocket a large gold watch, adorned with enamel. He showed it to Madame Sipyágin.—"Have you seen my watch? It was given to me by Mikhaíl, you know . . . . the Servian Prince . . . . Obrenóvitch. Here is his monogram,—look at it. He and I are great friends. We have hunted together. He 's a splendid young fellow! And he has a hand of iron, as a ruler should have. Oh, he is not fond of jesting! No-oo-oo!"

Kallomyeítzeff dropped into an arm-chair, crossed his legs, and began slowly to pull off his left glove.

"We ought to have that sort of a Mikhaíl here, in our government."

"Why so? Are you discontented with anything?"

Kallomyeítzeff wrinkled up his nose.

"It 's that county council, as usual! That county council! Where 's the use of it? It only weakens the administration, and arouses .... unnecessary ideas. . ." (Kallomyeítzeff dangled his left hand, freed from the oppression of its glove, in the air.) "I have spoken about that in Petersburg .... *mais, bah!* The wind was not setting in that direction. Even your husband .... imagine! However, he is well known as a liberal."

Madame Sipyágin straightened herself up on her little divan.

"What? And you, Mr. Kallomyeítzeff, do you offer opposition to the government?"

"I? Opposition? Never! Not on any terms! *Mais j'ai mon franc parler.* I sometimes criticise, but I always submit!"

"It is precisely the opposite with me! I do not criticise, and I do not submit."

"*Ah! mais, c'est un mot!* With your permission, I will communicate your remark to my friend Ladislas; *vous savez,* he is making preparations to write a romance of high life, and he has already read me several chapters. It will be charming! *Nous aurons enfin le grand monde russe peint par lui-même.*"

"Where is it to appear?"

"In the *Russian Messenger,* of course. That is our *Revue des Deux Mondes.* I see that you read it."

"Yes; but do you know, it is becoming very stupid."

"Possibly . . . . possibly . . . . And the *Russian Messenger* also, if you like, for some time past—to speak in the current jargon—has been getting a wee bit groggy of late."

Kallomyeítzeff laughed at the top of his voice; it struck him as very amusing to say "has been getting groggy," and "a wee bit."—*"Mais, c'est un journal qui se respecte!"*—he went on,—"and that is the principal thing. I must inform you that I . . . take very little interest in Russian literature; a lot of plebeians are cutting a figure in it nowadays. Things have come to such a pass, that the heroine of a romance is—a plain cook, *parole d'honneur!* But I shall read Ladislas's romance, without fail. *Il y aura le petit mot pour rire* . . . . and its tendency! its tendency. The nihilists will be put to shame—my guarantee for that is Ladislas's turn of mind—*qui est très correct."*

"But not his past,"—remarked Madame Sipyágin.

"Ah! jetons un voile sur les erreurs de sa jeunesse!"—exclaimed Kallomyeítzeff, and drew off his right glove.

Again Madame Sipyágin frowned slightly. She coquetted a little with her wonderful eyes.

"Semyón Petróvitch,"—she said,—"allow me to ask you, why, when you are talking Russian, do you use so many French words? It seems to me that . . . pardon me . . . that is an old-fashioned style."

"Why? why? Not every one possesses as capital a command of his native tongue as you do. As for myself, I recognise the Russian language as the language of decrees and governmental ordinances; I prize its purity! I bow down before Karamzín! . . . But Russian, the every-day language, so to speak . . . Does it exist? Now, for example, how would you have translated my exclamation—*de tout à l'heure: 'C'est un mot!'* That is a word! . . . Good heavens!"

"I would have said: 'that is a happy word.'"

Kallomyeítzeff burst out laughing.

"'A happy word!' Valentína Mikhaílovna! But is it possible that you do not feel that that . . . . instantly reeks of the theological seminary? . . . . All the salt has vanished. . . ."

"Well, you will not be able to convince me. But where is that Marianna?"—She rang the bell; a page entered.

"I gave orders that Marianna Vikéntievna should be requested to come to the drawing-room. Has she not been informed?"

Before the page could reply, there made her appearance, behind his back, on the threshold of the door, a young girl in a full, dark morning-gown, with her hair cut in a round crop—Marianna Vikéntievna Sinétzky, Madame Sipyágin's niece on the mother's side.

VI

"Pardon me, Valentína Mikhaílovna,"—she said, approaching Madame Sipyágin,—"I was busy, and lingered too long."

Then she bowed to Kallomyeítzeff, and, withdrawing to one side, she seated herself on a small tabouret, near the parrakeet, which, as soon as it caught sight of her, began to flap its wings and stretch out its neck toward her.

"Why hast thou seated thyself so far away, Marianna?"—remarked Madame Sipyágin, as she followed her with her eyes to the tabouret.—"Dost thou wish to be nearer to thy little friend? Just imagine, Semyón Petróvitch,"—she turned to Kallomyeítzeff,—"that parrot is simply in love with our Marianna. . . . ."

"That does not surprise me!"

"And it cannot endure me."

"That is astonishing! It must be that you tease it."

"Never; quite the contrary. I feed it with sugar. Only it will take nothing from my hands. No . . . it is sympathy . . . and antipathy. . ."

Marianna cast a sidelong glance at Madame Sipyágin . . . and Madame Sipyágin cast a glance at her.

These two women did not love each other.

In comparison with her aunt, Marianna might have been called almost "an ugly girl." She had a round face, a large, aquiline nose, grey eyes, which also were large, and very bright, slender brows, thin lips. She cut her chestnut hair short, and had an unsociable air. But from her whole being there emanated a strong and daring, impetuous and passionate element. Her hands and feet were tiny; her sturdily and supple little body reminded one of the Florentine statuettes of the sixteenth century; she walked gracefully and lightly.

Miss Sinétzky's position in Madame Sipyágin's house was decidedly a painful one. Her father, a very clever and energetic man, of semi-Polish extraction, had attained to the rank of General in the service, but had suddenly come to grief, having been detected in a huge theft from the government funds; he had been tried . . condemned, deprived of his rank and his nobility, and banished to Siberia. Then he had been pardoned . . and brought back; but he did not succeed in climbing up again, and died in extreme poverty. His wife, Sipyágin's own sister, the mother of Marianna (there were no children except herself), had not been able to bear up against the blow which had laid waste all her prosperity, and had died shortly after her husband. Uncle Sipyágin had given Marianna

an asylum in his own house.—But she loathed living the life of a dependent; she longed for freedom, with all the force of her unyielding soul—and an incessant, though concealed conflict, seethed between her and her aunt. Madame Sipyágin regarded her as a nihilist and an atheist; on her side, Marianna hated Madame Sipyágin as her involuntary oppressor. She shunned her uncle, as she did every one else.—She shunned them,—that is precisely the word,—she did not fear them; she had not a timid nature.

"Antipathy,"—repeated Kallomyeítzeff,—"yes, that is a strange thing. Everybody knows, for example, that I am a profoundly religious man, an Orthodox, in the fullest sense of the word; but I cannot look at a priest's plait of hair, or his long locks, with equanimity; something begins fairly to boil up within me, fairly to boil up."

Thereupon, Kallomyeítzeff, raising his clenched fist a couple of times, even demonstrated how his feelings seethed in his breast.

"Hair, in general, seems to annoy you, Semyón Petróvitch,"—remarked Marianna:—"I am convinced that you cannot look on with equanimity, either, when any one wears it cut short, as I do."

Madame Sipyágin slowly elevated her eyebrows and bent her head, as though amazed at the freedom of manner, wherewith the young girls of the present day enter into the conversa-

tion,—and Kallomyeítzeff displayed his teeth in a condescending smile.

"Of course,"—he remarked,—"I cannot but regret those lovely curls, like yours, Marianna Vikéntievna, which fall under the pitiless blades of the shears; but there is no antipathy in me; and, in any case . . . . your example might . . . . might . . . convert me!"

Kallomyeítzeff could not hit upon the Russian word,—and he did not care to speak in French, after his hostess's remark,—so he said "convertírovat."

"Thank God, Marianna does not yet wear eye-glasses,"—Madame Sipyágin joined in,—"and she has not yet parted with her collars and cuffs:—on the other hand, she occupies herself with the natural sciences, to my sincere regret; and she takes an interest in the question of Woman . . . that is true, is it not, Marianna?"

All this was said with the object of confusing Marianna; but she did not become confused.

"Yes, aunty,"—she replied,—"I read everything that is written on that subject; I try to understand in what that question consists."

"That 's what it is to be young!"—Madame Sipyágin addressed herself to Kallomyeítzeff:—"now, you and I do not busy ourselves with that, do we?—hey?"

Kallomyeítzeff smiled sympathetically; one must, of course, keep up the jest of an amiable lady.

"Marianna Vikéntievna,"—he began,—"is still full of that idealism . . . . that romanticism of youth . . . . which . . . . in the course of time . . . . ."

"However, I am maligning myself,"—Madame Sipyágin interrupted him:—"Those questions interest me also. For I am not so very old yet."

"And I, also, take an interest in all that,"—hastily exclaimed Kallomyeítzeff:—"only, I would prohibit discussion on that point!"

"You would prohibit discussion on that point?"—Marianna asked.

"Yes!—I would say to the public:—'I do not hinder your taking an interest . . but talk . . . ssshhhhh!'"—He raised his finger to his lips.—"In any case, I would prohibit discussion *in print!*—unconditionally!"

Madame Sipyágin laughed.

"Well? Don't you think that a commission should be appointed by the Ministry to settle that question?"

"A commission would answer very well. Do you think that we would settle the question any worse than all those starveling quill-drivers, who can see nothing beyond the end of their own noses, and imagine that they are . . . first-class

geniuses?—We would appoint Borís Andréitch chairman."

Madame Sipyágin laughed more heartily than ever.

"Look out, have a care; Borís Andréitch is sometimes a Jacobin. . . ."

"Jacot, jacot, jacot!" chattered the parrot.

Valentína Mikhaílovna shook her handkerchief at it.

"Don't prevent intelligent people from talking! . . . Marianna, make it stop."

Marianna turned to the cage, and began with her finger-nail to scratch the parrot's neck, which it immediately stretched out to her.

"Yes,"—pursued Madame Sipyágin,—"Borís Andréitch sometimes amazes even me. He has a touch, . . . a touch . . . of the tribune, about him."

"*C'est parce qu'il est orateur!*"—hotly put in Kallomyeítzeff, in French.—"Your husband possesses the gift of eloquence beyond all others, and he has become accustomed to dazzle . . . . *ses propres paroles le grisent* . . . . and, in addition, there is the desire for popularity . . . . However, he is somewhat in a bad humour, is he not? *Il boude? Eh?*"

Madame Sipyágin turned her eyes on Marianna.

"I have noticed nothing of the sort,"—she said, after a brief pause.

"Yes,"—went on Kallomyeítzeff, in a meditative tone,—"he was rather passed over at Easter."[1]

Again Madame Sipyágin directed his attention to Marianna, with her eyes.

Kallomyeítzeff smiled and screwed up his eyes, as much as to say:—"I understand."

"Marianna Vikéntievna!"—he suddenly exclaimed, in an unnecessarily loud tone;—"do you intend to give lessons in the school again this year?"

Marianna turned away from the cage.

"And do you take an interest in *that?* Semyón Petróvitch?"

"Of course; I even take a very great interest in it."

"You would not prohibit *that?*"

"I would prohibit the nihilists even thinking of schools; but, under the guidance of the priesthood, and with proper supervision over the priesthood,—I would establish them myself!"

"Would you really! Well, I do not know what I shall do this year. Everything went so badly last year.—And what is the school in summer, anyway?"

When Marianna spoke she gradually flushed, as though her speech cost her an effort, as though

[1] That is, received no promotion or order—or something less than his expectations.—TRANSLATOR.

she were forcing herself to go on with it. She had a great deal of pride.

"Thou art not sufficiently prepared?"—inquired Madame Sipyágin, with an ironical tremor in her voice.

"Possibly."

"What!"—exclaimed Kallomyeítzeff, again. —"What do I hear! O ye gods! In order to teach little peasant girls their *a b c's,* training is requisite?"

But at that moment Kólya rushed into the drawing-room with a shout: "Mamma! mamma! papa is coming!" and behind him, waddling on her fat legs, a grey-haired woman in a mob cap and a yellow shawl made her appearance—and also announced that Bórinka would be there directly.

This lady was Sipyágin's aunt, Anna Zakhárovna by name.—All the persons in the drawing-room sprang from their seats, and hastened into the anteroom, and thence ran down the steps upon the principal porch. A long avenue of clipped fir-trees led from the highway straight to this porch: along it an open carriage, drawn by four horses, was already rolling.—Valentína Mikhaílovna, who stood in advance of the rest, waved her handkerchief. Kólya screamed shrilly; the coachman adroitly drew up the smoking horses, the footman flew head over heels from the box, and came near tearing the carriage-door out

with its hinges and lock—and then, with a gracious smile on his lips, in his eyes, over all his face, flinging off his cloak with a dexterous movement of the shoulders, Borís Andréitch alighted on the ground. Valentína Mikhaílovna flung her arms around his neck gracefully and swiftly—and they exchanged three kisses. Kólya danced up and down, and tugged at the tails of his father's coat from behind . . . . but the latter first kissed Anna Zakhárovna, having preliminarily removed his extremely uncomfortable and hideous Scotch travelling cap from his head; then he exchanged greetings with Marianna and Kallomyeítzeff, who had also come out on the porch—(to Kallomyeítzeff he gave a hearty English handshake, "pump-handle fashion"—as though he were ringing a bell)—and only then did he turn to his son; he shook him under the armpits, lifted him up, and held him close to his face.

While all this was taking place, Nezhdánoff crawled quietly, and like a culprit, out of the carriage, and stopped short beside the front wheel, without taking off his hat, and casting sidelong glances. . . . . Valentína Mikhaílovna, having embraced her husband, darted a keen glance over his shoulder at this new figure;—Sipyágin had informed her that he would bring a tutor with him.

Continuing to exchange greetings and hand-

clasps, the whole party moved up the steps, along both sides of which the men and maid-servants were ranged in rows.—They did not approach to kiss their master's hand—that "Asiatic custom" had long since been done away with—and merely bowed respectfully; but Sipyágin replied to their bows more with his brows and his nose than with his head.

Nezhdánoff also made his way up the broad steps. As soon as he entered the anteroom, Sipyágin, who had already been seeking him with his eyes, introduced him to his wife, to Anna Zakhárovna, and to Marianna; but to Kólya he said: "This is thy teacher, I beg that thou wilt be obedient to him! Give him thy hand!"—Kólya timidly offered his hand to Nezhdánoff, then riveted his eyes on him; but evidently, not finding in him anything particular or agreeable, he again seized hold of his "papa."—Nezhdánoff felt awkward, exactly as he had in the theatre. He wore an old, decidedly unsightly overcoat; the dust of the road had settled all over his face and hands.—Valentína Mikhaílovna said something pleasant to him; but he did not clearly distinguish her words, and made no reply, merely noticing, that she gazed at her husband with peculiar brilliancy, and pressed close to him. —He was displeased by Kólya's curled and pomaded locks; at the sight of Kallomyeítzeff he thought: "What a smoothly-licked phiz!"—and

to the other persons he paid no attention whatever. Sipyágin turned his head around with dignity, a couple of times, as though taking a survey of his penates, during which operation, his long, pendulous side-whiskers and his thick, small nape stood out with special distinctness.—Then, in a strong, luscious voice, which had not been rendered in the least hoarse by the journey, he called to one of the lackeys: "Iván! Conduct Mr. Teacher to the green chamber, and carry his trunk up there also"—and he announced to Nezhdánoff, that he might now rest and get unpacked and cleaned up—and that dinner was served in their house promptly at five o'clock. Nezhdánoff bowed, and followed Iván to the "green" room, which was situated in the second story.

The whole company went into the drawing-room. There the greetings were repeated once more;—the half-blind old nurse made her appearance with a reverence. Out of respect to her age, Sipyágin allowed her to kiss his hand, and excusing himself to Kallomyeítzeff, withdrew into his bedroom, accompanied by his wife.

VII

The clean and spacious chamber, to which the servant conducted Nezhdánoff, had windows which gave upon the garden. They were open, and a light breeze was gently puffing out the white shades: they bellied out like sails rising and then falling again. Athwart the ceiling golden reflections slipped softly: a spring-like fresh, and rather damp odour filled the whole room. —Nezhdánoff began by dismissing the servant, unpacking his things from his trunk, washing and dressing himself. The journey had exhausted him; the constant presence, for two whole days, of a strange man,—with whom he had talked a great deal, on various subjects, and fruitlessly,—had irritated his nerves: something bitter, which was not exactly tedium, nor yet exactly malice, had secretly made its way to the very depths of his being; he was enraged at his faint-heartedness —but still his heart ached.

He went to the window, and began to gaze into the garden. It was one of the black-loam gardens of our great-grandfathers, such as are not to be seen this side of Moscow.—Laid out on the long slope of a steep hill, it consisted of four

clearly-defined sections. In front of the house, for a couple of hundred paces, extended a flower-garden, with straight, sanded paths, clumps of acacias and lilacs, and circular "flower-plots"; on the left, running past the stable-yard, to the very threshing-floor, stretched the fruit-orchard, thickly planted with apple-, pear-, and plum-trees, currant-bushes and raspberry-bushes; directly opposite the house, in a huge, dense square, rose intersecting linden alleys. On the right, the view was bounded by the highway, screened by a double row of silvery poplars; from behind the cluster of weeping birches the steep roof of a hot-house was visible. The whole garden was clothed with the tender verdure of the first beauty of the spring blossoming forth; the powerful summer humming of the insects was not yet to be heard; the young leaves were lisping,—and finches were singing somewhere about, and a couple of turtle-doves kept cooing always on the same tree, while a cuckoo was uttering its note, and changing its place every time; and far away, from beyond the mill-pond, there was wafted the vehement croaking of the daws, resembling the creaking of a multitude of cart-wheels. And over all this young, solitary, quiet life floated the bright clouds, swelling out their breasts like huge, lazy birds.—Nezhdánoff gazed and listened, inhaling the air through his parted, chilled lips. . . .

And he seemed to feel more at ease; silence descended upon him also.

And, in the meantime, down-stairs, a conversation was in progress about him. Sipyágin was telling his wife how he had made his acquaintance, and what Prince G. had said to him, and what conversations they had indulged in during the journey.

"A clever head!"—he repeated,—"and with knowledge; he is handsome, it is true, but thou knowest that that counts for nothing with me; at all events, those people have ambition. Yes, and Kólya is too young; he will not acquire any folly from him."

Valentína Mikhaílovna listened to her husband with an affectionate and, at the same time, a sneering smile, as though he were making confession to her of a rather strange but amusing prank; she even seemed to find it pleasant that her *"seigneur et maître,"* so steady a man and so important an official, was still capable of suddenly taking and playing a prank, just as though he had been twenty years of age. As he stood before the mirror, in a snow-white shirt and sky-blue suspenders, Sipyágin began to brush his hair in the English fashion, with two brushes;—and Valentína Mikhaílovna, tucking her feet up under her on the low Turkish divan, began to impart to him a variety of information concerning the household management, the paper fac-

tory, which, alas! was not thriving as it should, about the cook, who must be changed, about the church, whose plaster had tumbled down, about Marianna, about Kallomyeítzeff. . . .

Unfeigned confidence and concord reigned between the married pair; they actually lived "in love and concord," as the expression used to run in the olden days; and when Sipyágin, having completed his toilet, gallantly asked Valentína Mikhaílovna for her "little hand," when she gave him both hands, and looked on with tender pride, as he kissed them alternately,—the feeling which was expressed on the countenances of both was a good and upright feeling, although in her case it shone in eyes worthy of Raphael, and in his in the plain "peepers" of a general.

Precisely at five o'clock Nezhdánoff went down-stairs to dinner, apprised not even by the sound of a bell, but by the prolonged roar of a Chinese gong. The whole company was already assembled in the dining-room. Sipyágin again greeted him from the heights of his neck-cloth, and pointed out his place at table, between Anna Zakhárovna and Kólya. Anna Zakhárovna was a very aged spinster, the sister of the deceased Sipyágin, senior; she emitted an odour of camphor, like a garment which has long been packed away, and she had an uneasy and dejected aspect. She fulfilled in the house the office of Kólya's valet, or governor; her wrinkled face expressed

discontent when Nezhdánoff was seated between her and her nursling. Kólya cast a sidelong glance at his new neighbour; the clever boy speedily divined that the teacher felt awkward, that he was confused; and the latter never raised his eyes, and ate almost nothing. This pleased Kólya; up to that moment, he had been afraid that the teacher would turn out stern and irascible. Valentína Mikhaílovna also glanced, from time to time, at Nezhdánoff.

"He looks like a student,"—she said to herself, —"and he has not lived in society; but he has an interesting face, and hair of an original colour, like that of the apostle whom the old Italian masters always painted as red-haired,—and clean hands." However, all the people at the table looked at Nezhdánoff, and were considerate of him, so to speak, leaving him in peace, at the outset; he was conscious of this, and was gratified at it, and, at the same time, for some reason or other, it made him angry. The conversation at table was conducted by Kallomyeítzeff and Sipyágin. The discussion turned on the county council, the Governor, the peasants' obligation to furnish posting-horses, the land-redemption agreements, mutual acquaintances in Petersburg and Moscow, the Lyceum of Mr. Katkóff, which had just entered into operation, the difficulty of obtaining labourers, fines and damages to grain-fields by grazing cattle, and also about Bismarck,

about the war of '66, and about Napoleon III, whom Kallomyeítzeff pronounced to be a gallant fellow. The young Gentleman of the Imperial Bedchamber expressed extremely retrograde opinions: he talked so much that, at last, he quoted —jestingly, it is true—the toast of a landed-proprietor of his acquaintance at a certain Name-day banquet: "I drink to the only principles which I recognise as valid," this excited squire had exclaimed: "to the knout and to Roederer!"

Valentína Mikhaílovna frowned, and remarked at this quotation—"*de très mauvais gout.*"—Sipyágin, on the contrary, expressed extremely liberal opinions; he politely and rather negligently confuted Kallomyeítzeff; he even mocked at him.

"Your alarms on the score of the emancipation, my dear Semyón Petróvitch,"—he said to him, among other things,—"remind me of a memorial which our most respected and most amiable Alexyéi Iványitch Tverítinoff sent in 1860, and which he read everywhere in the Petersburg drawing-rooms. It contained one particularly fine phrase about how our emancipated peasant would infallibly march, torch in hand, over the face of the entire fatherland. You ought to have seen how our dearest Alexyéi Iványitch, puffing out his little cheeks, and with his little eyes popping out of his head, uttered with his infantile mouth: 'a torch! a torch! he will march with a torch!'

Well, and the emancipation has been accomplished. . . . But where is the peasant with his torch?"

"Tverítinoff,"—retorted Kallomyeítzeff, in a gloomy tone,—"was mistaken only on this point, that it is not the peasants, but other people, who are going about with torches."

At these words Nezhdánoff, who up to that moment had hardly noticed Marianna,—she was sitting obliquely opposite him,—suddenly exchanged a glance with her, and immediately felt that they two, the sullen girl and himself, were of one mind and one stamp. She had made no impression whatever upon him when Sipyágin had introduced him to her; why had he now exchanged glances precisely with her? He immediately put the question to himself: Was it not shameful, was it not disgraceful to sit and listen to such opinions, and not to protest, and to give, by one's silence, occasion to think that one shared them? Nezhdánoff cast a second glance at Marianna, and it seemed to him that in her eyes he read the answer to his question: "Wait; the time has not yet come . . . it is not worth while . . . . later there will be plenty of opportunity. . . ."

It was pleasant to him to think that she understood him. Again he began to lend an ear to the conversation. . . . Valentína Mikhaílovna came to her husband's support, and expressed herself even more freely, in an even more radical manner

than he had done. She did not comprehend, "positively she did not com . . . pre . . . . hend," how a young and well-educated man could cling to such an antiquated routine!

"But,"—she added,—"I am convinced that you only say that for the sake of making a fine phrase. As for you, Alexyéi Dmítritch,"—she turned to Nezhdánoff with an amiable smile (he was inwardly amazed that she should be acquainted with his name and patronym),—"I know that you do not share the apprehensions of Semyón Petróvitch; Borís has communicated to me your conversations with him on the journey."

Nezhdánoff crimsoned, bent over his plate, and muttered something unintelligible: he was not exactly abashed, but he was not accustomed to bandying repartee with such brilliant personages. Madame Sipyágin continued to smile upon him; her husband graciously seconded her. . . On the other hand, Kallomyeítzeff, with much deliberation, stuck his round eye-glass between his eyebrow and his nose, and stared at the student who dared not state his "apprehensions."—But it was difficult to disconcert Nezhdánoff in that way; on the contrary: he immediately straightened himself up and stared, in his turn, at the fashionable official;—and just as suddenly as he had felt a comrade in Marianna, did he divine an enemy in Kallomyeítzeff! And Kallomyeítzeff divined it also; he dropped his little piece of glass, turned

away, and tried to turn it off with a laugh . . . but it was not a success; only Anna Zakhárovna, who secretly adored him, mentally stood on his side, and became still more enraged at her uninvited neighbour, who had separated her from Kólya.

Soon afterward the dinner came to an end. The company passed out on the terrace to drink coffee; Sipyágin and Kallomyeítzeff lighted cigars. Sipyágin offered a genuine regalia to Nezhdánoff, but the latter declined it.

"Akh! yes!"—exclaimed Sipyágin; "I had forgotten:—you smoke only cigarettes!"

"A strange taste,"—observed Kallomyeítzeff, between his teeth.

Nezhdánoff came near flying into a passion.—"I know the difference between a regalia and a cigarette very well, but I do not wish to lay myself under obligations,"—was on the point of bursting from his tongue. . . . He restrained himself; but he immediately set down this second piece of impertinence to the "debit" account of his enemy.

"Marianna!" said Madame Sipyágin suddenly, in a loud voice:—"do not stand on ceremony before the newcomer . . . light up thy little cigarette, for heaven's sake! The more so,"—she added, addressing Nezhdánoff,—"as I have heard, all the young ladies smoke in your sphere of society."

"Just so, madame," replied Nezhdánoff, drily. —This was the first word he had uttered to Madame Sipyágin.

"But I do not smoke,"—she went on, amiably narrowing her velvety eyes. . . "I am behind the times."

Marianna slowly and with much precision, as though with the object of enraging her aunt, drew out a dainty cigarette and a matchbox, and began to smoke. Nezhdánoff also ligthed a cigarette, borrowing a light from Marianna.

It was a wonderfully beautiful evening. Kólya went off into the garden with Anna Zakhárovna; the remainder of the party remained for about an hour longer on the terrace, enjoying the air. The conversation progressed in a tolerably lively manner. . . . Kallomyeítzeff made an attack on literature; in this direction, also, Sipyágin showed himself to be a liberal, defended its independence, demonstrated its value, even alluded to Chateaubriand, and to the fact that the Emperor Alexánder Pávlovitch had conferred upon him the Order of Saint Andrew the First-Called.[1] Nezhdánoff did not intermeddle in this controversy. Madame Sipyágin regarded him with an expression which seemed to indicate, on the one hand, that she approved his modest self-

[1] Usually conferred only upon male members of the Imperial Family, and on a few foreign rulers, almost exclusively royal.—TRANSLATOR.

restraint, and on the other hand—was a little surprised at it.

They all went into the drawing-room for tea.

" We have a very bad habit in our house, Alexyéi Dmítritch,"—said Sipyágin to Nezhdánoff: " in the evening we play cards, and a forbidden game at that . . . . slam,—just fancy!—I do not invite you . . . . but Marianna will be so good as to play something for us on the piano. For you are fond of music, I hope, are you not? " And, without waiting for an answer, Sipyágin took the pack of cards in his hand. Marianna seated herself at the piano and played, neither well nor badly, several of Mendelssohn's " Songs without Words."—*" Charmant! Charmant! Quel touche! "* cried Kallomyeítzeff from a distance, as though scalded; but this exclamation was uttered chiefly out of politeness; and Nezhdánoff, despite the hope expressed by Sipyágin, had no liking whatever for music.

In the meantime, Sipyágin, with his wife, Kallomyeítzeff, and Anna Zakhárovna, sat down to play cards. . . Kólya came to say good-night, and having received his parents' blessing, and a big glass of milk instead of tea, went off to bed; his father shouted after him, that he was to begin his lessons with Alexyéi Dmítritch on the morrow. A little later, perceiving that Nezhdánoff was hanging about unoccupied in the middle of the room, and constrainedly turning over the leaves

of the photograph-album, Sipyágin told him not to stand on ceremony, but to go to his own room and rest, as he was probably fatigued with the journey; that the principal motto in their house was: liberty.

Nezhdánoff availed himself of the permission and, after making his bow to them all, he left the room; at the door he came face to face with Marianna, and on looking her once more in the eye, once more he became convinced that he and she would be good comrades, although she not only did not smile at him, but even contracted her brows.

He found his room completely filled with the fragrant freshness; the windows had stood open all day long. In the garden, directly opposite his windows, a nightingale was trilling softly and melodiously; the nocturnal sky beamed dim and warm with beauty above the crests of the linden-trees; the moon was on the verge of rising. Nezhdánoff lighted a candle; the grey nocturnal moths fairly showered in from the dark garden and made for the light, circling round, and coming into collision with one another, but the breeze blew them away, and made the bluish-yellow flame of the candle flicker.

"It is strange!" thought Nezhdánoff, as he got into bed. . . . "The master and mistress of the house are nice people, apparently, liberal, even humane; . . . . but I feel sad in my soul, somehow. An Imperial Chamberlain, ... a

Gentleman of the Emperor's Bedchamber. . . . Well, the morning is wiser than the evening. . . . There 's no occasion for growing sentimental."

But at that moment the watchman beat loudly and persistently on his plank in the garden—and his long-drawn shout rang out: "Lis . . te . e . . en!"

"Wa-a-a-atch!"—responded another mournful voice.

"Phew, great God!—exactly as though it were a fortress!"

VIII

Nezhdánoff awoke early, and without waiting for the servant to make his appearance, he dressed himself, and descended into the garden. It was very large and beautiful, and was kept in capital order; hired labourers were scraping the paths with spades; amid the dark-green of the shrubbery flashed scarlet kerchiefs on the heads of peasant lasses armed with rakes. Nezhdánoff made his way to the pond; the morning mist had cleared away from it,—but it was still smoking in places in the shady curves of the shores. The sun, which was not high yet, cast a rosy light over the silky leaden hue of its broad surface. Five carpenters were at work on the dam; there also, lightly swaying from side to side, and sending out from itself a faint ripple across the water, a new, handsomely painted boat was rocking. The sounds of the people's voices were infrequent and repressed; over all there was a breath of morning, of the tranquillity and success of matutinal labour, a breath of order and a regularly organised life. And lo! at a turn of the avenue, the personification of order and regularity presented itself to Nezhdánoff—Sipyágin himself made his appearance. He wore a yellow-grey

coat, in form like a dressing-gown, and a party-coloured cap; he was leaning on an English cane of bamboo, and his freshly-shaved face exhaled satisfaction; he was walking about to inspect his domain. Sipyágin gave Nezhdánoff a courteous greeting.

"Aha!"—he exclaimed;—"I perceive that you are one of the young people, and an early bird!" He probably wished, by this not particularly appropriate saying, to express his approval of Nezhdánoff, because the latter, like himself, did not lie late in bed.—"We drink tea in company at eight o'clock, in the dining-room, and at twelve o'clock, we breakfast; at ten o'clock, you will give Kólya his first lesson in the Russian language, and at two, in history. To-morrow, the ninth of May, is his Name-day, and there will be no lessons; but I beg that you will begin to-day!"

Nezhdánoff inclined his head, and Sipyágin took leave of him in the French manner, raising his hand swiftly several times in succession to his own lips and nose—and went his way, adroitly flourishing his cane, and whistling—not in the least like an important official or dignitary,—but like a kindly Russian country gentleman.

Nezhdánoff remained in the garden until eight o'clock, enjoying the shade of the ancient trees, the freshness of the air, the singing of the birds; the roar of the gong summoned him to the house —and he found the whole company in the dining-

room. Valentína Mikhaílovna treated him in an extremely amiable manner; in her morning toilet she seemed to him a perfect beauty. Marianna's face expressed her wonted concentration and surliness. Precisely at ten o'clock the first lesson took place, in the presence of Valentína Mikhaílovna; she first inquired of Nezhdánoff whether she would not be in the way, and she behaved very discreetly throughout. Kólya proved to be an intelligent lad; after the inevitable first hesitations and awkwardnesses, the lesson proceeded successfully. Valentína Mikhaílovna appeared to be extremely well satisfied with Nezhdánoff, and several times entered into conversation with him.—He hung back, but not too much. Valentína Mikhaílovna was present, also, at the second lesson in Russian history. She announced with a smile, that on that subject she needed a teacher as much as Kólya did—and behaved herself as decorously and as quietly as at the first lesson. From three until five o'clock Nezhdánoff sat in his own chamber, wrote letters to Petersburg, and—and felt himself . . . so-so; he was not bored, he was not sad; his strained nerves were gradually relaxing. They became strained again during dinner, although Kallomyéitzeff was absent, and the caressing kindness of the hostess had undergone no change; but that very kindness somewhat enraged Nezhdánoff.—In addition to this, his neighbour, the old spinster,

Anna Zakhárovna, was openly hostile and in the sulks, while Marianna continued to be serious, and Kólya kicked him with his feet with altogether too much lack of ceremony. Sipyágin, also, appeared to be out of sorts. He was greatly dissatisfied with the superintendent of his paper-factory, a German, whom he had hired at a large salary. Sipyágin began to abuse all Germans in general, in which connection he announced that he was, to a certain degree, a Slavyánophil, although not a fanatic, and he alluded to a young Russian, a certain Solómin, who, according to report, had put the factory of a neighbouring merchant on a very good footing; he greatly desired to make the acquaintance of this Solómin. Toward evening, Kallomyeítzeff arrived, his estate being only ten miles distant from "Arzhánoe"; that was the name of Sipyágin's village. The arbitrator of the peace arrived also, one of those landed proprietors whom Lérmontoff has no neatly characterised in the two familiar lines:

> All hidden in his neckcloth, with frock-coat to his heels. . .
> Moustache, falsetto—and troubled gaze.

There came also another neighbour, with a dejected, toothless countenance, but very cleanly dressed; the district doctor came, a very wretched physician, who was fond of showing off his

learned terminology; he asserted, for example, that he preferred Kúkolnik to Púshkin, because Kúkolnik had a great deal of "protoplasm." They sat down to play slam. Nezhdánoff retired to his own room—and read and wrote until after midnight.

On the following day, the ninth of May, Kólya's Name-day was celebrated. The "gentry," in a mass, in three open carriages, with lackeys on the foot-board, set out to attend the Liturgy, although the church was not more than a quarter of a verst away. Everything went off in very ceremonious, stately, and sumptuous style. Sipyágin donned his Order-ribbon; Valentína Mikhaílovna dressed herself in a very charming Paris gown—pale lilac in hue—and in church, during the service, she prayed out of a tiny book, bound in crimson velvet; this little book took some of the old men aback; one of them could not control himself, and inquired of his neighbour: "Is she practising witchcraft, the Lord forgive her!"[1] The fragrance of the flowers with which the church was filled, mingled with the strong scent of the new sulphur-dipped peasant coats, the tarred boots and peasants' shoes—and over all these exhalations the stiflingly-agreeable perfume of the incense predominated. The clerics and sacristans in the chancel-choirs sang with

[1] The members of the Eastern Catholic Church do not use prayer-books, being trained to know the services by heart from early childhood.—Translator.

wonderful assiduity. With the aid of the factory-hands, who had joined them, they even made a bold attempt at a concert.[1] There was a minute when all present felt rather . . . . apprehensive. The tenor voice (it belonged to the factory-hand Klim, a man with the worst form of consumption) emitted, without any sort of support whatever, chromatic, minor, and flat notes:—they were horrible, those notes! but if they had been eliminated the entire "concert" would instantly have gone to pieces. . . . As it was, the affair passed off well enough. Father Kyprián, a priest of the most venerable appearance, with epigonation and berretta[2] preached a very edifying sermon out of his note-book; unhappily, the zealous father considered it necessary to quote the names of several very wise Assyrian kings, which gave him great trouble as to pronunciation—and, although he displayed a certain amount of learning, still he also perspired violently! Nezhdánoff, who had not been to church for a long time, tucked himself away in a corner behind the peasant women; they merely gazed askance at him,

[1] At a certain point in the Liturgy—when the clergy are receiving the Sacrament in the altar, behind the closed doors of the ikonostásis, and nothing is in progress in the sight or hearing of the congregation—it is customary for the choir to sing an elaborate selection, generally called a "concert."—TRANSLATOR.

[2] Both are insignia of ecclesiastical rank. The epigonation is a square or diamond-shaped piece of material corresponding to the cope, representing "the sword of the Spirit," and is worn on the hip. The berretta, of purple velvet, also has two shapes, indicative of rank, the lesser being conical.—TRANSLATOR.

from time to time, making profound reverences, and gravely wiping their children's noses; on the other hand, the little peasant girls, in their new frocks, with pearl fringes on their brows, and the little boys, in their blouses girt about the waist, and their embroidered shoulder-seams and scarlet gussets, attentively scrutinised the new worshipper, turning their faces straight toward him. . . . And Nezhdánoff gazed at them, and thought—various things.

After the Liturgy, which lasted a very long time, and the prayer-service to St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, which, as every one knows, is about the most lengthy of all the prayer-services in the Orthodox Church, the entire staff of clergy, by invitation of Sipyágin, betook themselves to the manor-house, and, after performing several more ceremonies befitting the occasion, and even sprinkling the rooms with holy water, received an abundant breakfast, in the course of which the customary hopeful but rather tiresome conversation took place. Both the host and the hostess—although they never breakfasted at that hour of the day—ate a little and sipped a little on that occasion. Sipyágin even narrated an anecdote, perfectly decorous, but laughable—which, in combination with his red ribbon and his official dignity, produced an impression that may be described as joyous, and aroused in Father Kyprián a feeling of gratitude and admiration.

By way of "recompense," and also in order to show that he also, on occasion, could impart something curious, Father Kyprián told about his interview with "the prelate," when the latter, in his trip of inspection through the diocese, summoned all the priests of the district to him to the monastery in the town.—"Our Bishop is strict, very strict,"—declared Father Kyprián:—"First he inquires about the parish and the arrangement of affairs, and then he puts you through an examination. . . . He addressed himself to me, also. —'What 's thy church feast?'—'The Transfiguration of the Lord,' says I.—'And dost thou know the hymn for that day?'—'I should think I did!'—'Chant it!'—'Well, so I immediately started up: "Thou wast transfigured on the Mount, O Christ our God. . . ."' 'Stop! What is the Transfiguration, and how is it to be understood?'—'In one word,' says I, 'Christ desired to show his glory to his 'disciples!' —'Good,' says he; 'here 's an ikóna for thee from me, as a souvenir.'—I bowed to his feet.—'I thank thee, Right Reverence!' says I. . . And so I did not leave him empty-handed."

"I have the honour to be personally acquainted with his Right Reverence,"—remarked Sipyágin, with an air of importance.—"A most worthy pastor!"

"Most worthy!"—assented Father Kyprián.

"Only, there's no use in his trusting too much to the ecclesiastical superintendent. . . ."

Valentína Mikhaílovna alluded to the peasant school, and in this connection, pointed out Marianna as a future teacher; the deacon (he was intrusted with the oversight of the school);—a man of athletic build, and with a long, wavy head of hair, which dimly suggested the well-combed tail of an Orlóff trotter, was on the point of expressing his approbation; but as he did not take the powers of his throat into consideration, he produced such a deep quack, that he frightened even himself, and terrified the rest.—Shortly after this, the clergy withdrew.

Kólya, in his new round jacket with gold buttons, was the hero of the day: he received presents, he was congratulated, his hand was kissed from the front steps and from the back steps: the factory-hands, the house-servants, the old women and the young girls, the peasant men—chiefly out of ancient tradition of serfdom days—buzzed about in front of the house, around the tables spread with patties and flagons of liquor.—Kólya was both ashamed and delighted, and proud and abashed, and he cuddled up to his parents, and ran out of the room; and at dinner Sipyágin ordered champagne to be served,—and, before drinking to his son's health, he made a speech. He spoke about the significance of "serving the earth,"—and along what road he would like to

have his Nikolái walk! . . . (he called him precisely that)—and what they had a right to expect from him: in the first place, his family, in the second place, his social class, society; in the third place, the masses,—yes, my dear sirs, the masses,—and, in the fourth place, the government! Gradually elevating his style, Sipyágin at last attained to genuine eloquence, and therewith, after the similitude of Robert Peel, he thrust his hand under his coat-tails; he became touched with emotion over the word "science," and wound up his speech with the Latin exclamation: "*Laboremus!*" which he immediately translated into Russian. Kólya, champagne-glass in hand, walked down the whole length of the table to thank his father, and kissed everybody.

Again it happened that Nezhdánoff exchanged glances with Marianna. . . . Both of them, in all probability, felt the same thing. . . . But they did not speak to each other.

However, everything which he had seen struck Nezhdánoff as more ridiculous and even interesting, than vexatious or repulsive, and the amiable hostess, Valentína Mikhaílovna, appeared to him to be a very clever woman who knew that she was playing a part, and, at the same time, was secretly delighted that there was another person, also clever and perspicacious, who understood her . . . Nezhdánoff probably did not himself suspect, to

what a degree his self-love was flattered by her manner of treating him.

On the following day the lessons were resumed, and life flowed on in its wonted rut.

A week passed, imperceptibly. . . The very best idea as to what Nezhdánoff felt, as to what he thought, will be furnished by an extract from a letter of his to a certain Sílin, a comrade of his at the gymnasium, and his best friend. This Sílin did not live in Petersburg, but in a distant governmental town with a wealthy relative, on whom he was entirely dependent. His situation had been so ordained that he could not even dream of ever breaking away from it; he was a weakly man, timid, and of limited capacity, but remarkably pure in soul. He was not interested in politics, he perused a few little books, he played on the flute to relieve the tedium, and was afraid of young ladies. Sílin was passionately attached to Nezhdánoff—he had in general an affectionate heart. There was no one to whom Nezhdánoff so unrestrainedly expressed his thoughts as to Vladímir Sílin; when he wrote to him it always seemed to him that he was chatting with a near and familiar being,—but an inhabitant of the other world, or his own conscience. Nezhdánoff could not even imagine to himself how he could ever again live with Sílin on friendly terms in the same town. . . He would, in all probability, have immediately cooled toward

him; they had very little in common; but he wrote to him gladly and voluminously—and with entire frankness. With others—on paper, at least,—he always seemed to be deceiving or putting on airs;—with Sílin—never! As he did not wield a ready pen, Sílin made scant reply in brief, awkward phrases; but Nezhdánoff did not require lengthy answers: he knew, without that, that his friend devoured his every word, as the dust of the highway drinks in the spatters of rain, kept his secrets like a holy thing—and, buried in remote and never-quitted isolation, lived only with his life. Nezhdánoff had never told any one in the world of his relations to him, and treasured them to an uncommon degree.

"Well, my dear friend,—my pure Vladímir!"—[thus he wrote to him: he always called him "pure," and not without reason!]—"congratulate me: I have hit upon green pastures, and can now rest and recuperate my strength. I am living as tutor, in the house of the wealthy dignitary Sipyágin, I am teaching his little son, I am eating splendid food (I never ate such food in my life), I am sleeping soundly, I am strolling to my heart's content in the beautiful surrounding country—and, the chief thing of all: I have escaped, for a time, from the tutelage of my Petersburg friends; and although at first I was fiercely gnawed by tedium, I seem to feel more at my ease now. I shall speedily be compelled to put my shoulder to the wheel, which thou knowest, that is to say, to crawl into the pannier, as I have

offered myself as the load (and that is precisely the reason why I was given leave of absence to come hither); but for the time being I may live the precious animal life, grow a fat belly—and, perhaps, even compose verses, if the desire impels me. The so-called observations are postponed until another time: the estate seems to me well organised, only perhaps the factory is in rather a bad condition; the peasant lands bought at the Emancipation are, somehow, inaccessible; the hired house-servants all are exceedingly decorous characters. But we will discuss that later on. The master and mistress of the house are courteous, liberal; the gentleman is forever condescending, forever condescending—and then, all of a sudden, he takes and flares up; a highly cultured man! The lady—a regular beauty, and must have her wits about her, I think; she keeps such good watch of one—and yet she is so gentle!—Absolutely boneless! I amuse her; for thou knowest what sort of a squire of dames I am!—There are neighbours—bad ones; one old woman persecutes me. . . . But there is one young girl who interests me most of all, and whether she is a relative or a companion,—the Lord only knows! —with whom I have hardly exchanged two words, but whom I divine to be a berry from the same field as myself. . . . ."

Here followed a description of Marianna—of all her habits; and then he went on:

"That she is unhappy, proud, egotistical, reserved, but, most of all, unhappy, I have not the slightest doubt. Why she is unhappy,—I have not, as yet, found out.

That she has an upright nature,—is clear to me; but is she kind?—that is the question. And are there any thoroughly kind women in existence—unless they are stupid? And is that necessary? However, I know very little about women in general. The mistress of the house does not like her. . . And she repays her in the same coin. . . . But which of them is in the right—I know not. I assume that the mistress of the house is more likely not to be in the right . . . as she is extremely polite to her; and *she* even twitches her eyebrows nervously when she talks with her patroness. Yes; she is a very nervous creature; that, also, is in my line. And she is *dislocated*,—just as I am,—although, probably, not in the same manner.

"When all this becomes somewhat straightened out, I will write to thee. . . .

"She hardly ever talks with me, as I have already told thee; but in her few words addressed to me (always suddenly and unexpectedly) there rings a certain harsh frankness. . . . This is very pleasing to me.

"By the way,—does thy relative still keep thee on a dry diet—and is n't he preparing to give up the ghost?

"Hast thou read, in the *European Messenger*, that article about the last Pretenders to the crown in the Orenburg Government? That took place in the year 1834, brother! I love not that magazine, and the author is a conservative; but it is an interesting thing, and may lead one to reflection. . . . ."

IX

May had rolled on to its second half; the first hot summer days had come.—On finishing his history lesson, Nezhdánoff wended his way to the garden, and from the garden passed into the birch grove which adjoined it on one side.—A portion of this grove had been felled by merchants, fifteen years previously; but all the denuded places were now planted with a dense underbrush of young birch-trees. Like pillars of a dull-silver hue, with greyish horizontal rings, stood the close-set trees; the little leaves shone with a clear and vigorous green, exactly as though some one had washed them, and had covered them with varnish; the spring grass was thrusting its sharp spears through the smooth layer of last year's dark straw-coloured foliage. The whole grove was intersected by narrow paths; yellow-billed black thrushes, with sudden cry as though alarmed, flitted athwart these paths, low down, almost grazing the ground, and dashed headlong into the thicket. After strolling about for half an hour, Nezhdánoff, at last, seated himself on the stump of a felled tree, surrounded by grey, aged chips: they lay in a heap, just as they had

fallen when chopped off long ago by the axe. Many times had the winter snow covered them—and retreated from them in the spring,—and no one had touched them. Nezhdánoff sat with his back to a thick wall of young birches, in a dense but short shadow; he was not thinking of anything, he had surrendered himself completely to that peculiar sensation of springtime with which —in the young as well as in the old heart—there is always an admixture of sadness . . . . the agitated sadness of expectation—in the young; the impassive sadness of regret—in the old. . . .

All at once Nezhdánoff heard the sound of approaching footsteps.

It was not one person who was walking there, —and not a peasant in bast slippers or in heavy boots,—and not a bare-footed peasant woman. There appeared to be two persons, walking at a leisurely, measured pace. . . . A woman's gown rustled lightly. . . .

All at once a dull voice, a man's voice, rang out:

"And so this is your last word? Never?"

"Never!"—repeated another, a woman's voice, which struck Nezhdánoff as familiar; and, a moment later, around a turn in the path which, at that point, wound among the young birch-trees,—Marianna stepped forth, accompanied by a swarthy, black-eyed man, whom Nezhdánoff had never beheld until that moment.

Both stopped short, as though rooted to the spot, at the sight of Nezhdánoff;—and Nezhdánoff was so astounded that he did not even rise from the stump on which he was sitting. . . . Marianna blushed to the very roots of her hair, but immediately burst into a scornful laugh. . . . To whom did that laugh refer—to herself, because she had blushed—or to Nezhdánoff? . . . And her companion knitted his thick eyebrows, and the yellowish whites of his restless eyes flashed. Then he exchanged a glance with Marianna,—and both, turning their backs on Nezhdánoff, walked away, in silence, without accelerating their pace, while he watched them with a look of amazement.

Half an hour later he returned to the house, to his room,—and when, summoned by the roaring of the gong, he entered the drawing-room, he beheld in it that same black-visaged stranger who had run up against him in the grove. Sipyágin led Nezhdánoff up to him, and introduced him as his brother-in-law, the brother of Valentína Mikhaílovna—Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch Markéloff.

"I beg, gentlemen, that you will love and favour each other!"—exclaimed Sipyágin, with the majestically courteous and, at the same time, preoccupied smile which was so characteristic of him.

Markéloff made a silent bow. Nezhdánoff re-

sponded in the same manner . . . and Sipyágin, throwing his small head a little backward and shrugging his shoulders, withdrew to one side,—as much as to say: "I have brought you together, and whether you do love and favour each other or not is a matter of entire indifference to me!"

Then Valentína Mikhaílovna approached to the pair who stood there immovable, again presented them to each other—and, with the peculiar, affectionately brilliant glance which, as though at the word of command, welled up in her wonderful eyes, entered into conversation with her brother.

"What dost thou mean, *cher Serge,* by forgetting us altogether! thou didst not even come to us on Kólya's Name-day. Have thy occupations so overwhelmed thee?

"He is establishing a new order of things with his peasants,"—she said, turning to Nezhdánoff,—"a very original order of things; he is giving them three fourths of everything—and leaving himself only one fourth; and even so, he thinks that he is getting a great deal."

"My sister is fond of jesting,"—said Markéloff, addressing Nezhdánoff, in his turn;—"but I am ready to agree with her that for *one* man to take one quarter of what belongs to whole *hundreds* really is to take a great deal."

"And you, Alexyéi Dmítritch,—have you observed that I am fond of jesting?"—inquired

Madame Sipyágin, still with the same caressing gentleness of look and voice.

Nezhdánoff did not know what reply to make; —and just then Kallomyeítzeff's arrival was announced. The hostess advanced to meet him and, a few minutes later, the butler made his appearance, and in a drawling voice announced that dinner was served.

At dinner Nezhdánoff involuntarily kept gazing at Marianna and Markéloff.—They sat side by side, both with eyes cast down, with compressed lips, with a lowering and stern, almost vicious expression of countenance. Nezhdánoff was particularly perplexed by the thought—how Markéloff could be the brother of Madame Sipyágin. There was so little resemblance to be observed between them.—Possibly, in one point only: they both had swarthy skins; but Valentína Mikhaílovna's dull-white complexion, arms and shoulders constituted one of her charms . . . . in her brother it passed into that blackness which polite people designate as "bronze," but which, to the Russian eyes, is suggestive of—the leg of a boot. Markéloff had curly hair, a rather hooked nose, thick lips, sunken cheeks, a hollow abdomen, and sinewy hands. Altogether, he was sinewy and lean, and he talked in a brazen, abrupt voice. His glance was drowsy, his aspect surly—a regular bilious temperament. He ate little, and spent most of his time in rolling little balls of bread,

and only now and then did he cast his eyes on Kallomyeítzeff, who had just returned from town, where he had seen the Governor in connection with an affair which was not in the least an agreeable one for him, Kallomyeítzeff, concerning which, however, he carefully held his peace, and chirped like a nightingale.

Sipyágin, as on the former occasion, snubbed him when he became too obstreperous, but laughed a great deal at his anecdotes and bon-mots, although he considered *"qu'il est un affreux réactionnaire."* Kallomyeítzeff asserted, among other things, that he had gone into perfect raptures over the name which the peasants—*oui, oui! les simples mougiks!*—bestow on lawyers. "Barkers! barkers!"—he repeated enthusiastically:—*"ce peuple russe est délicieux!"*—Then he related how, once upon a time, when he was visiting a school for the common people, he had put to the school-master a question: "What is a *strophokamíl?*"[1]—And, as no one was able to answer it, not even the teacher, he, Kallomyeítzeff, had put another question: "What is a *pithík?*"[2]—and had cited Khémnitzer's verse: "And the weak-minded *pithík,* the delineator of beast-like faces!"—And no one had answered that question of his either.—"So much for your popular schools!"

"But excuse me,"—remarked Valentína Mi-

[1] Ostrich.—Translator. [2] Ape.—Translator.

khaílovna,—"I myself do not know what sort of wild beasts those are."

"Madame!" exclaimed Kallomyeítzeff, "It is not necessary that you should know!"

"But why should the people know?"

"Because—it is better for them to know *pithík* or *strophokamíl* than—some Prudhomme or other—or even Adam Smith!"

But at this point Sipyágin snubbed Kallomyeítzeff once more by announcing that Adam Smith was one of the lights of human thought, and that it would be useful to imbibe his principles (he poured himself out a glass of château d'Yquem) . . . . "along with the mother's milk!" (he passed the wine under his nose and inhaled the aroma). . . . Then he gulped down the wine. Kallomyeítzeff also sipped the wine and praised it.

Markéloff paid no particular attention to the babble of the Petersburg Gentleman of the Emperor's Bedchamber, but he cast a couple of interrogative glances at Nezhdánoff, and, firing a bread-ball, he came within an ace of hitting the eloquent visitor straight on the nose. . . .

Sipyágin left his brother-in-law in peace; Valentína Mikhaílovna did not talk to him either; it was obvious that both of them, husband and wife, had become accustomed to regard Markéloff as an eccentric person who had better not be irritated.

After dinner Markéloff betook himself to the

billiard-room to smoke his pipe, and Nezhdánoff went off to his room.—In the corridor he encountered Marianna. He was on the point of passing her . . when she stopped him with an abrupt gesture of her hand.

" Mr. Nezhdánoff,"—she began, in a rather unsteady voice,—" it really ought to be a matter of indifference to me what you think about me: nevertheless, I suppose . . . . I suppose . . . ." (she was at a loss for words) . . . " I suppose that it is appropriate to say to you, that when you met me and Mr. Markéloff to-day in the grove . . . . You probably thought, did you not, ' Why did both of them become confused, and why did they come thither,—as though by appointment? ' "

" It really did strike me as rather strange . . ." began Nezhdánoff.

" Mr. Markéloff,"—interposed Marianna,—" made me an offer of marriage—and I refused him. That is all I have to say to you; and now—good-bye. And think what you will of me."

She turned swiftly away, and retreated down the corridor with hasty steps.

Nezhdánoff returned to his own room and, seating himself by the window, fell into thought.—What a strange girl, and to what end that savage sally, that unbidden frankness? What was it—a desire to be original—or simply pompous language—or pride? Most likely of all it was

pride. She could not endure the slightest suspicion. . . . She could not bear the thought that another person should judge falsely concerning her.—A strange girl!

Thus did Nezhdánoff meditate; and downstairs, on the terrace, a conversation about him was in progress; and he heard it all very distinctly.

"My nose scents out,"—asserted Kallomyeítzeff,—"scents out that he is—a red. Formerly, when I was an official for special commissions, attached to the General-Governor of Moscow,—*avec Ladislas,*—I got my wits sharpened on the subject of that sort of gentry—the reds, and also the Old Ritualists. I used to get the upper hand of them instinctively."—Here Kallomyeítzeff, "by the way," narrated how, once upon a time, in the suburbs of Moscow, he had caught *by the heels* an old sectarian, on whom he had made a sudden descent with the police, and who had all but leaped out of the window of his cottage. . . . "And up to that minute he had been sitting peaceably on his bench, the knave!"

Kallomyeítzeff forgot to add, that that same old man, when put in prison, had refused all food—and had starved himself to death.

"And your new teacher,"—went on the mettlesome Gentleman of the Bedchamber,—"is a red, without fail! Have you noticed that he never is the first to bow?"

"But why should he be the first to bow?"—re-

marked Madame Sipyágin;—"on the contrary, I like that in him."

"I am a guest in the house where he serves," —exclaimed Kallomyeítzeff,—"yes, yes, serves for money, *comme un salarié*. . . Consequently, I am his superior.—And he *ought* to make me the first bow."

"You are very exacting, my dearest fellow," —interposed Sipyágin, with emphasis on *est;*— "all that, pardon me, reeks of antiquated customs. I have purchased his services, his work, but he remains a free man."

"He does not feel the bit,"—went on Kallomyeítzeff,—"the bit,—*le frein!* All those reds are just like that. I tell you, I have a wonderful nose for them!—No one but Ladislas, possibly, can compete with me in that respect.—If he were to fall into my hands, that tutor,—I 'd bring him up with a round turn! He should sing another tune for me;—and the way he would take off his hat to me would be simply splendid!"

"The rubbish, the braggart!"—Nezhdánoff above came near shouting out. . . . But at that moment the door of his room opened—and, to the no small amazement of Nezhdánoff,—Markéloff entered.

X

Nezhdánoff rose from his seat to welcome him, but Markéloff walked straight up to him, and without a bow, without a smile, asked him: "was it true that he was Alexyéi Dmítritch Nezhdánoff, student of the St. Petersburg University?"

"Yes . . . exactly so,"—replied Nezhdánoff.

Markéloff drew from a side pocket an unsealed letter.—"In that case, read this. It is from Vasíly Nikoláevitch,"—he added, significantly lowering his voice.

Nezhdánoff unfolded and read the letter. It was something in the nature of a semi-official circular, in which the bearer, Sergyéi Markéloff, was recommended as one of "ours," who was entirely worthy of confidence; then followed an injunction as to the pressing necessity of concerted action, as to the dissemination of well-known rules. The circular was addressed to Nezhdánoff, among others, as to a man who was also trustworthy.

Nezhdánoff offered his hand to Markéloff, invited him to be seated, and sat down himself on a chair. Markéloff began by lighting a cigarette, without having uttered a word. Nezhdánoff followed his example.

"Have you already succeeded in entering into relations with the peasants here?"—inquired Markéloff, at last.

"No; I have not succeeded in that, so far."

"And is it long since you arrived here?"

"It will soon be a fortnight."

"Are you very busy?"

"Not very."

Markéloff coughed gruffly.

"Hm! The common people here are a pretty empty lot,"—he went on;—"an ignorant lot. They must be instructed. There is great poverty, and no one can explain whence that poverty arises."

"Your brother-in-law's former serfs are not poverty-stricken, so far as I can judge,"—remarked Nezhdánoff.

"My brother-in-law is a sly dog; he 's a master-hand at diverting one's attention. The local peasants are all right, 't is true; but he has a factory. That is where our efforts must be applied. All you have to do is to delve down there: things will be turned upside down immediately, as though it were an ant-hill.—Have you any little books with you?"

"Yes . . . but not many."

"I 'll get you some. How does that happen?"

Nezhdánoff made no answer.—Markéloff, also, relapsed into silence, and merely emitted smoke through his nostrils.

"But what a villain that Kallomyeítzeff is,"—he suddenly went on.—"At dinner I kept thinking: 'Shall I rise and go up to that gentleman and pound his whole arrogant phiz to powder, in order that others may not be tempted to do the same? But no! There are more important matters on hand at present, than thrashing Gentlemen of the Bedchamber!'—This is no time for waxing wroth with fools because they utter foolish words; now is the time to prevent their perpetrating foolish deeds."

Nezhdánoff nodded his head affirmatively,—and again Markéloff devoted himself to his cigarette.

"Here, out of all the menials in the house, there is one very business-like young fellow,"—he began again;—"not your servant Iván . . . he 's a sort of fish, but the other fellow—his name is Kyríll; he serves in the pantry." (This Kyríll was well known to be a bitter drunkard.) "You just pay heed to him. He 's a turbulent fellow . . . but we cannot afford to be dainty. And what do you say to my sister?"—he added, suddenly raising his head and riveting his yellow eyes on Nezhdánoff.—"She is even more crafty than my brother-in-law. What is your opinion about her?"

"I think that she is a very agreeable and amiable lady. . . And she is very handsome, to boot."

"Hm! with what precision you gentlemen from

Petersburg express yourselves. . . I am amazed! —Well . . . and as for . . . ." he was beginning, but suddenly frowned; his face grew lowering, and he did not finish the sentence which he had begun.—" I perceive that you and I must have a good talk,"—he began afresh.—" Here it is impossible. The devil take them! I believe they listen at the doors. Do you know what I am going to propose to you? To-day is Saturday; to-morrow, probably, you do not give my nephew any lessons? . . is n't that so? "

" I have a review lesson with him to-morrow, at three o'clock."

" A review! Exactly like a rehearsal at the theatre. It must be that dear sister of mine who invents such words. Well, never mind. Come at once to me, will you? My village lies ten versts from here. I have good horses: we will drive off thither at full speed; you shall pass the night with me, and spend the morning,—and to-morrow, by three o'clock, I will fetch you back. Do you accept? "

" Very well,"—said Nezhdánoff. From the first moment of Markéloff's entrance he had felt himself in an excited and constrained condition. —His sudden intimacy with him disconcerted him; but, at the same time, he felt drawn toward him. He felt, he understood, that he had before him a being who was probably dull, but was indisputably honest—and powerful.—Added to

this, that strange encounter in the grove, that unexpected explanation from Marianna.

"Well, that 's very fine!"—exclaimed Markéloff.—"Meanwhile, do you make ready; and I will go and give orders to have the tarantás harnessed. I hope that you are not obliged to ask permission of the heads of the house here?"

"I shall inform them. Otherwise, I assume that I cannot absent myself."

"I will tell them,"—put in Markéloff.—"Don't trouble yourself.—At present they are quarrelling over their cards, and will not notice your absence. My brother-in-law aspires to become a statesman, and the only qualification he has for the post is, that he plays cards capitally. Well, there 's no use talking about it; many make their way through that wicket-gate! . . . So hold yourself in readiness. I will immediately take all necessary measures."

Markéloff left the room; and an hour later Nezhdánoff was sitting by his side, on a large leather cushion, in a spacious, roomy, very old-fashioned and very comfortable tarantás; the thick-set little coachman on the box kept whistling incessantly, with a wonderfully agreeable, bird-like whistle; the troïka of piebald horses, with black plaited manes and tails, dashed swiftly along the level road; and the separate trees, bushes, fields, meadows and ravines,—already veiled in the first shades of twilight (the clock

had struck ten at the moment of their departure); —glided smoothly past, some behind, others in front, according to their degree of remoteness.

Markéloff's tiny hamlet (it had only two hundred desyatínas [1] of land in all, and yielded an income of about seven hundred rubles, and was called Borzyónkovo) was situated three versts [2] from the capital of the government, from which Sipyágin's estate lay at a distance of seven versts. In order to reach Borzyónkovo, it was necessary to traverse the town.—The new acquaintances had not succeeded in exchanging half a hundred words, when the wretched suburban hovels of the petty burghers flitted before them, with their broken board roofs, and dim splotches of light in their tiny windows twisted out of the perpendicular; and then the stones of the town pavement thundered beneath the wheels, the tarantás jolted, and lurched from side to side, bouncing upward, and at every jolt they swept past merchants' stupid, two-story stone houses with pediments, churches with columns, taverns. . . . It was almost Sunday; there were no longer any pedestrians in the streets, but there were still throngs of people in the dram-shops. Hoarse voices rang out thence, drunken songs, the whining sounds of the accordion; from the suddenly-opened doors rushed forth sordid heat, the pun-

[1] A desyatína is 2.70 acres.—Translator.
[2] A verst is 0.66 of a mile.—Translator.

gent odour of spirits, the red glow of night-lights. In front of almost every dram-shop stood peasant-carts, harnessed to shaggy, pot-bellied nags; submissively drooping their dishevelled heads, they appeared to be asleep. A tattered, girdleless peasant, with a puffy, winter cap hanging on the nape of his neck like a sack, emerged from a dram-shop, and leaning his breast against the shafts, remained motionless, weakly fingering over something, and spreading out his hands and fumbling; or a gaunt factory-hand, with his cap on one ear, with his nankeen blouse hanging loosely, and barefooted,—he had left his boots in the dram-shop,—took a few irresolute steps, halted, scratched his back, and, suddenly emitting a groan, turned back. . . .

"Liquor vanquishes the Russian man!" gloomily remarked Markéloff.

"It 's grief, dear little father, Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch!"—remarked the coachman, without turning round; he had ceased to whistle as he passed each dram-shop, and seemed to retreat into himself.

"Go on! Go on!"—replied Markéloff, angrily shaking the collar of his coat. The tarantás crossed a spacious market-place, all reeking with the odour of cabbage and linden-bast sacking, passed the Governor's residence, with its striped sentry-boxes at the gate, a private house with a tower, the boulevard with recently-planted and al-

ready expiring trees, the grand bazaar, filled with the barking of dogs and the rattling of chains; and gradually emerging beyond the town gates, having overtaken a long, long train of sledges which had set out on their journey while it was still cold, they found themselves once more in the air of the country, on the highway fringed with willows—and once more they rolled briskly and smoothly onward.

Markéloff—we must really say a few words about him—was six years older than his sister, Madame Sipyágin. He had been educated in the artillery school, whence he had graduated as an officer; but he had resigned, while still holding the rank of ensign, on account of a row with his commander—a German. Thenceforth he hated the Germans, especially Russian Germans. His resignation had ruined his relations with his father, whom he never saw again before the latter's death; but he had inherited from him a tiny estate, and had settled down on it. In Petersburg he had frequently associated with various clever, prominent people, whom he fairly venerated; they had definitively determined his mode of thought. Markéloff had read little,—and chiefly books pertaining to the cause:—especially Hertzen. He had preserved his military mien, lived like a Spartan and a monk. A few years prior to our story he had fallen passionately in love with a young girl; but the latter had jilted him in

the most unceremonious manner, and had married an adjutant—who was, moreover, of German extraction. Markéloff likewise detested adjutants. He tried to write special articles concerning the defects of our artillery service, but he possessed no talent for exposition:—he was not able to complete a single article—and yet he continued to scrawl huge sheets of common paper all over with his big, awkward, truly-childish chirography. Markéloff was a stubborn man, intrepid to desperation, who was incapable of forgiving or forgetting, was constantly offended on his own account, and on the account of all oppressed people—and ready for anything. His shallow mind hammered away constantly at one and the same point: what he did not understand did not exist for him; but he both despised and detested falsehood and lying. With persons of the higher class, with " reactionary high officials," as he expressed himself, he was curt and even rude; with the common people he was simple; with a peasant he was as sociable as with a brother. He was a mediocre farmer; he had divers socialistic plans whirling through his brain, which he was as unable to put in practice as he was to finish the articles which he had begun about the defects of the artillery. On the whole—he was not lucky—never, in anything: in the military academy he had borne the nickname of " the unlucky." A sincere, straightforward man, with a passionate, unhappy nature, he could, under cer-

tain circumstances, show himself to be pitiless, bloodthirsty, and earn the name of monster—and he could, also, sacrifice himself unhesitatingly and irrevocably.

At the third verst from the town, the tarantás suddenly entered the soft gloom of an aspen-grove, with the rustle and quiver of invisible foliage, with the fresh bitterness of the forest scent, with dim apertures above, and tangled shadows below. The moon had already risen above the horizon, red and broad as a copper shield. Emerging from beneath the trees, the tarantás found itself in front of a small manor-house. Three lighted windows stood out like brilliant squares on the front of the low-roofed house, which obscured the disk of the moon: the gates, which stood ajar, were never closed. In the courtyard, through the semi-darkness, a tall kibítka was visible, with two white posting-horses hitched behind to the rack. Two puppies, also white, sprang out from somewhere or other, and set up a piercing but not ill-natured barking. People began to move about in the house—the tarantás rolled up to the steps; and, with difficulty climbing out, and searching with his foot for the iron step, affixed, as usual, by a home-bred blacksmith, in the most inconvenient place possible, Markéloff said to Nezhdánoff:

"Here we are, at home—and you will find here guests whom you know well, but were by no means expecting to meet.—Pray enter!"

XI

These guests turned out to be our old acquaintances, Ostrodúmoff and Miss Mashúrin. Both were sitting in the small, very badly furnished drawing-room of Markéloff's house—and were drinking beer and smoking tobacco by the light of a kerosene lamp. They were not surprised at Nezhdánoff's arrival; they knew that Markéloff intended to bring him back with him; but Nezhdánoff was greatly surprised at the sight of them. When he entered, Ostrodúmoff said: "Good evening, brother!"—and that was all; Miss Mashúrin first blushed all over, then offered her hand. Markéloff explained to Nezhdánoff that Ostrodúmoff and Miss Mashúrin had been sent "on the general business," which was now soon to be put in operation; that they had left Petersburg a week before; that Ostrodúmoff was to remain in the Government of S. for the purposes of propaganda,—but Miss Mashúrin was going to K., to interview a certain man.

Markéloff suddenly became angry, although no one had contradicted him:—with flashing eyes he began to talk in an excited, dull, but distinct voice, about the horrors that had been perpetrated,

about the indispensability of immediate action, and to the effect, that, in reality, everything was ready, and only cowards could dally; that a certain amount of force was indispensable, like the thrust of a lancet in an abscess, however ripe that abscess may be! He repeated this comparison of the lancet several times: it evidently pleased him; he had not invented it, but had read it somewhere or other.—It appeared that, having lost all hope of reciprocity on the part of Marianna, he had no compassion on anything any longer, and thought of nothing except how to begin on "the cause" as speedily as possible. He talked as though he were chopping with an axe, without any artifice, sharply, simply, and viciously; his words leaped monotonously out of his pallid lips, one after the other, in a manner suggestive of the barking of a stern and aged watch-dog. He showed that he was well acquainted with the neighbouring peasants and factory-hands, and that there were active men among them,—as, for instance, Goloplyótzky Eremyéi,—who, on the instant, would do anything that was wanted. This "goloplyótzky" Eremyéi—Eremyéi from the village of Goloplyók—was constantly recurring to his tongue. At intervals of every ten words he brought his right hand down with a bang—not palm-wise, but edge-wise—on the table, and thrust the left hand into the air, with the index-finger standing apart.—Those lean,

hairy hands, that booming voice, those flaming eyes, produced a powerful impression. During the ride Markéloff had talked little with Nezhdánoff; his bile had been accumulating . . . . and now it had broken forth. . . Miss Mashúrin and Ostrodúmoff encouraged him with a smile, a glance, occasionally with a brief exclamation; but something strange took place with Nezhdánoff. At first he tried to reply; he reminded them of the harmfulness of over-haste, of premature, inconsiderate actions; most of all, he was amazed how everything had already been decided, and why there was no doubt whatever, and no occasion whatever to consult circumstances, nor even to try to find out what the populace really wanted. . . . But later on all his nerves became as taut as guitar-strings—began to quiver—and with a sort of desperation, almost with tears of fury in his eyes, with his voice breaking into a scream, he began to talk in the same spirit as Markéloff; he even went further than the latter. —What incited him to this it would be difficult to say: whether it was repentance for having weakened of late, or vexation at himself and at others, or a sense of the necessity of stifling some inward worm or other, or, in conclusion, a desire to show off before the newly-arrived missionaries, ... or whether Markéloff's words really had taken effect on him, and fired his blood. The discussion continued until daybreak; Ostrodúmoff

and Miss Mashúrin never rose from their chairs, and Markéloff and Nezhdánoff never sat down. Markéloff stood rooted to one spot, exactly like a sentry; and Nezhdánoff kept pacing up and down the room with uneven strides, now slowly, now hurriedly. They talked about impending measures and means, about the part which each one was to assume, then sorted out and tied up in packages various wretched little books and separate printed sheets; they alluded to a merchant, a member of the sect of Old Ritualists, a certain Golúshkin, as an extremely reliable although uneducated man, and to the young propagandist Kislyakóff, who was expert, you know, but altogether too lively and possessed of too lofty an opinion of his own talents. Solómin's name was also mentioned. . . . .

" Is that the man who manages the cotton-spinning factory? "—inquired Nezhdánoff, recalling what had been said about him at the table of the Sipyágins.

" That 's the very man,"—said Markéloff.—" We must introduce you to him; we have not got a nibble at him, as yet, but he 's a capable man."

Eremyéi from Goloplyók made his appearance on the scene once more. Sipyágin's Kirílo was coupled with him, and with a certain Mendelyéi, nicknamed Porpoise, also; only, it was difficult to rely on this Porpoise; when sober he was brave,

but when drunk he was cowardly; and he was almost always drunk.

"Well, and how about your own people,"—Nezhdánoff asked Markéloff—"is there any one among them on whom you can rely?"

Markéloff replied that there was; but he did not mention a single one of them by name, and began to talk about the petty burghers in the town, and the theological students, who were, moreover, all the more useful because they were very stout in bodily strength—and when they should once begin to bring their fists into play,—well, just look out for yourself!—Nezhdánoff made some inquiries as to the nobles. Markéloff answered him that there were fifty of the young men—one of them, even, was a German,—and he was the most radical of the lot; only, everybody was aware that no reliance can be placed on a German . . . . he will immediately cheat you or sell you!—And they must wait to see what news Kislyakóff would obtain.—Nezhdánoff also inquired about the military men. Thereupon Markéloff stammered, tugged at his long side-whiskers, and finally declared that, so far, there was absolutely nothing to say about them . . . . unless Kislyakóff should discover something.

"But who is this Kislyakóff?"—exclaimed Nezhdánoff, impatiently.

Markéloff laughed significantly, and said that he was a man . . . such a man. . . . "However,

I am not very well acquainted with him,"—he added: "I have only met him twice, in all; but what letters that man does write, what letters! I will show you. . . . You will be amazed! simply—fire! And what activity! He has galloped from one end of Russia to the other, in all directions, five or six times . . . and at every posting-station a letter of ten or twelve pages!"

Nezhdánoff glanced inquiringly at Ostrodúmoff; but the latter sat like a statue, and never even moved an eyelash; and Miss Mashúrin pursed up her lips in a bitter smile,—and she also made as though she could not even guess! Nezhdánoff undertook to question Markéloff as to his reforms, in the socialistic spirit,—in his farming . . . but at this point Ostrodúmoff joined in.

"What is the use of discussing that now,"—he remarked,—"it makes no difference—everything must be altered later on.

The conversation returned again to political ground. The secret, inward worm continued to nibble and gnaw Nezhdánoff; but the more powerful was that gnawing the more loudly and irrevocably did he talk.—He had drunk only one glass of beer; but, from time to time, it seemed to him that he was completely intoxicated—and his head swam, and his heart beat with a sickly strenuousness. But when, at last, in the hour after midnight, the disputes came to an end, and the interlocutors, stepping round the page who was

sleeping in the anteroom, strode off to their separate nooks, Nezhdánoff, before he got into bed, stood for a long time motionless, with his eyes riveted on the floor in front of him. He seemed to hear an incessant, sorrowful, soul-nipping accent in everything which Markéloff had uttered; that man's egotism must have been wounded, he *must* have suffered, his hopes of personal happiness must have come to grief,—and yet, he had forgotten himself, he had surrendered himself to that which he recognised as the truth! A fellow of limited mind, thought Nezhdánoff. . . . "But is it not a hundred times better to be that sort of limited fellow than such . . . . such an one as I, for instance, feel myself to be?"

But here he rebelled against his self-humiliation.

"Why so? Shall not I, also, be capable of sacrificing myself? Wait, gentlemen. . . . And thou, Pákhlin, shalt also become convinced, in the course of time, that I, although I am an æsthetic, although I do write verses . . . . ."

He angrily flung back his hair with his hand, gnashed his teeth and, hastily pulling off his clothes, flung himself on the cold, damp bed.

"Good night!"—rang out Miss Mashúrin's voice on the other side of the door:—"I am your neighbour."

"Good-bye,"—replied Nezhdánoff, and immediately recalled the fact that she had never

taken her eyes from him during the whole course of the evening.

"What does she want?"—he whispered to himself—and was overcome with shame. "Akh, let me go to sleep as soon as possible!"

But it was difficult to control his nerves . . . . and the sun was already quite high in the heavens when at last he fell into a heavy and unrefreshing slumber.

The next morning he rose late, with a headache. He dressed himself, went to the window of the mezzanine [1] in which his chamber was situated—and perceived that Markéloff had no regular manor whatever; his small house stood on an exposed bluff, not far from a grove. A small granary, a stable, a tiny underground store-house, a little cottage, with a half-ruined straw thatch, on one side; on the other, a tiny pond, a small kitchen-garden, a hemp-patch, and another little cottage with a similar roof; in the distance, a rick of grain, a tiny threshing-shed, and an empty threshing-floor—this was all the "abundance" which presented itself to the eye. Everything seemed poor, rotten, and not exactly neglected or run wild, but as though it had never known a blossoming-time, like a sapling which has not taken root well. Nezhdánoff went down-stairs. Miss Mashúrin was sitting in front of the samo-

[1] In Russia, this term is used to designate a partial second story.—TRANSLATOR.

vár in the dining-room,—and, evidently, waiting for him. He learned from her that Ostrodúmoff had gone away on business—and would not return for a couple of weeks; and their host had gone off to attend to his hired labourers. As May was already approaching its end, and there was no work on hand which required haste, Markéloff had taken it into his head to fell a small birch-grove with his own tools, and had betaken himself thither early in the morning. Nezhdánoff felt a strange weariness in his soul. So much had been said the previous evening about the impossibility of any longer delay, and that all that remained to do was to "set to work." But how set to work, at what—and without delay, to boot? —There was no use in asking Miss Mashúrin; she knew no wavering; she was in no doubt as to what she ought to do, which was to go to K. Further than that she did not look. Nezhdánoff did not know what to say to her—and, having drunk his tea, he put on his hat, and went off in the direction of the birch-grove. On the way he met some peasants who were driving manure-wagons, former peasants of Markéloff's. He entered into conversation with them . . . but he did not get much out of them. They, too, seemed weary—but with physical, every-day fatigue, which did not, in the least, resemble the feeling that he was experiencing.—Their former owner, according to their statements, was a simple gentle-

man, only rather queer; they prophesied his ruin, because he did not know the rules and was always trying to act after his own fashion, not as his ancestors had done. And he was puzzling—you could n't understand him, try as you would!—but the kindest of the kind!—Nezhdánoff strolled on, and came upon Markéloff himself.

He was walking along, surrounded by a whole throng of labourers: it could be seen from a distance that he was explaining something to them, elucidating something—and then he waved his hand . . . . as much as to say: " I give it up! "

By his side walked his superintendent, a young fellow, mole-eyed, without anything imposing in his mien. This superintendent kept incessantly repeating: " That is as you like, sir,"—to the great vexation of his superior, who expected more independence from him. Nezhdánoff approached Markéloff, and beheld on his face the expression of exactly the same sort of spiritual weariness which he was feeling himself.—They bade each other good morning; Markéloff immediately began to talk,—briefly, it is true—about the " problems " of the previous evening, about the nearness of an upheaval; but the expression of weariness did not leave his countenance. He was all covered with dust and perspiration; chips of wood, green threads of moss had attached themselves to his clothing; his voice was hoarse. . . . The men who surrounded him maintained silence:

they were not exactly frightened, nor were they exactly sneering. . . . Nezhdánoff looked at Markéloff—and Ostrodúmoff's words again rang in his head: "What 's the use of it? It makes no difference—everything must be altered later on!" One labourer, who had committed a fault, began to entreat Markéloff to remit him his fine. . . . . At first Markéloff flew into a rage and shouted frantically—and then forgave him. . . . "It makes no difference—everything must be altered later on. . . ." Nezhdánoff asked for horses and a carriage that he might return home; Markéloff seemed to be surprised at his desire, but replied that everything should be ready directly.

He returned to the house in company with Nezhdánoff. . . . On the way he staggered with exhaustion.

"What is the matter with you?"—inquired Nezhdánoff.

"I am worn out!"—said Markéloff, fiercely.—"Explain things to those men as you will, they can understand nothing—and they do not execute my orders. . . . They don't even understand Russian.—The word 'portion' they know very well, . . . but 'sharing'—what is 'sharing'?[1] They do not understand! But it 's a Russian word, too, devil take it!—They imagine that I want to give to them a portion of land!" (Mar-

[1] Portion—*utchástok;* sharing—*utchástie.*—TRANSLATOR.

kéloff had taken it into his head to explain to the peasants the principle of association, and to introduce it on his own property, but they had resisted.—One of them had even said, in this connection: "The hole was deep, . . . but now the bottom cannot be seen, . . ." and all the other peasants had heaved a deep, unanimous sigh, which had completely annihilated Markéloff.)

On entering the house he dismissed his suite, and began to make arrangements about the carriage and horses—and about breakfast. . His staff of servants consisted of the page-boy, a woman-cook, a coachman, and a very antique old man, with ears overgrown with hair, in a long, cotton-and-wool kaftan, the former valet of his grandfather.—This old man stared incessantly, with profound dejection, at his master, and did nothing else,—and was hardly in a condition to do anything else; but he was always present, perched up on the little platform of the porch at the entrance.

After breakfasting on hard-boiled eggs, pilchards, and a dish of cold hash mixed with kvas (the page handed round the mustard in an old pomade-jar),—Nezhdánoff seated himself in the same tarantás in which he had arrived on the preceding evening: but instead of three horses, they had harnessed up only two for him: the third was being shod—it had gone lame. In the course of the breakfast Markéloff said very little, ate

nothing, and breathed violently. . . . He uttered two or three bitter words about his farming—and again waved his hand, with a gesture of despair. . . . . "It makes no difference—everything must be altered later on." Miss Mashúrin asked Nezhdánoff to take her to the town; she was obliged to go thither to make a few purchases: —"and I can return from town on foot—or I will get a lift in the cart of some peasant who is coming back."—As he escorted them both to the porch, Markéloff mentioned that he would soon send again for Nezhdánoff—and then . . . then (he gave a start, and recovered a little of his spirits)—they must come to a final agreement; that Solómin would come also; that he, Markéloff, was only waiting for news from Vasíly Nikoláevitch—and then there would be but one thing left to do: to "set to work" without delay—because the people (those same people who did not understand the word "sympathy") would not consent to wait any longer!

"But were you not going to show me the letters of that . . . what 's his name?—Kislyakóff?" —inquired Nezhdánoff.

"Later . . . later . . ."—said Markéloff, hastily.—"We 'll do everything then, all together."

The tarantás moved off.

"Hold yourself in readiness!" Markéloff's voice rang out for the last time. He was standing

on the steps, and by his side, with the same unalterable dejection in his gaze, with his crooked form drawn up, and both hands crossed behind his back, and emitting an odour of sour rye bread and the Oriental cotton-and-wool stuff of his kaftan,—but hearing nothing,—stood "the servant of servants," the decrepit old valet of his grandfather. Miss Mashúrin preserved silence until they reached the town, and merely smoked a cigarette. As they approached the town barrier she suddenly heaved a loud sigh.

"I am sorry for Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch,"—she said, and her face clouded over.

"He has put himself to a lot of trouble,"—remarked Nezhdánoff:—"it strikes me that his farm affairs are in a bad condition."

"That is not the reason I pity him."

"Why, then?"

"He is an unhappy, an unlucky man! . . . who could be better than he is; . . . but no, even he does not amount to much!"

Nezhdánoff looked at his companion.

"Why, do you know anything?"

"I know nothing . . . but every one divines for himself. Farewell, Alexyéi Dmítritch."

Miss Mashúrin alighted from the tarantás, and an hour later Nezhdánoff was driving into the courtyard of the Sipyágin house.—He did not feel very well. . . He had passed a sleepless

night . . . . and then, all those controversies . . . those discussions . . . . . .

A handsome face looked out of the window, and bestowed a friendly smile on him. . . . It was Madame Sipyágin welcoming his return.

" What eyes she has! " he said to himself.

XII

A GREAT many people came to dinner—and after dinner Nezhdánoff, taking advantage of the general commotion, slipped away to his own room. He wanted to be alone with himself, if only for a little while, that he might reduce to order the impressions which he had brought back from his trip. —At table Valentína Mikhaílovna had glanced at him attentively several times,—but evidently had no opportunity to speak to him; and Marianna, after her unexpected sally, which had so amazed him, seemed to be overcome with compunction, and shunned him.—Nezhdánoff was about to take up his pen; he wished to have a chat on paper with his friend Sílin;—but he found nothing to say to his friend; or, possibly, so many contradictory thoughts and sensations had accumulated in his head that he did not try to disentangle them—and he deferred it until another day.—Among the persons at dinner had been Mr. Kallomyeítzeff; never had he displayed more arrogance and gentlemanly scorn; but his free-and-easy speeches produced no effect on Nezhdánoff: he did not notice them. A sort of cloud enveloped him; it hung like a partly-dim

curtain between him and the rest of the world—and, strange to say, athwart that curtain only three faces were visible to him—and all three the faces of women—and all three had their eyes intently riveted upon him. They were: Madame Sipyágin, Miss Mashúrin, and Marianna. What did it mean? And why precisely those three faces? What had they in common? And what did they want of him?

He went to bed early,—but could not get to sleep. He was haunted by thoughts which were not so much sad as gloomy . . . thoughts about the inevitable end, about death. . . . They were familiar to him. For a long time he turned them over, in this direction and in that, now shuddering before the probability of annihilation, again welcoming it, almost rejoicing at it.—At last he became conscious of a peculiar agitation which was familiar to him. . . . He rose, seated himself at his writing-table, and, after meditating a while, wrote the following lines in his private note-book, almost without corrections:

"Dear friend, when I shall die—[1]
This is my will for thee:
The whole mass of my writings
Destroy thou, in that same hour!
Surround thou me with flowers,
Admit the sun to the room—

[1] I do not attempt a metrical translation. The alternate lines rhyme in the original.—TRANSLATOR.

Behind the closed doors
Set thou musicians.
Forbid them mournful plaint!
As at the hour of feasts,
Let the audacious waltz shriek forth
'Neath bows of violins!
As I hear the vanishing sounds
Of the strings as they die away,
I, too, shall die, and fall asleep. . . .
And troubling not with groan
The silence of death impending,
I shall pass to the other world,
Lulled by the airy sounds
Of airy earthly joy!"

When he wrote the word "friend" he was thinking still of Sílin. He declaimed his poem in an undertone—and felt astonished that it had flowed from his pen. This scepticism, this indifference, this frivolous unbelief—how did it all accord with his principles, with what he had said at Markéloff's?—He tossed the note-book into the table-drawer, and returned to his bed.—But he fell asleep just before dawn, when the first larks were already carolling in the whitening sky.

On the following day he had just finished lessons and was sitting in the billiard-room, when Madame Sipyágin entered, looked around her with a smile, and stepping up to him, invited him to come to her boudoir. She wore a light

barège gown, very simple and very pretty: the sleeves, bordered with a ruche, only came as far as her elbows, a broad ribbon encircled her waist, her hair fell in thick masses on her neck. Everything about her was redolent of courtesy and affection—of cautious, encouraging affection—everything: the tempered brilliancy of her half-closed eyes, the soft languor of her voice, of her movements, of her very gait. Madame Sipyágin conducted Nezhdánoff to her boudoir, a cosey, pleasant room, all permeated with the fragrance of flowers and perfumes, with the clean freshness of feminine attire, of constant feminine habitation; she seated him in an arm-chair, sat down beside him, and began to question him about his little excursion, about Markéloff's manner of life—and so cautiously, gently, nicely! She displayed genuine sympathy for the lot of her brother, whom, up to that moment—in Nezhdánoff's presence—she had never once mentioned. From some of her remarks one might have inferred that the feeling with which Marianna had inspired him had not escaped her notice; she fretted a little . . whether because Marianna had not shown reciprocity, or because her brother's choice had fallen upon a girl who was not congenial to her, did not appear. But the principal point was that she was openly endeavouring to subjugate Nezhdánoff, to inspire him with confidence in her, to make him cease to feel shy.—Valentína

Mikhaílovna even scolded him a little for entertaining a false impression with regard to her.

Nezhdánoff listened to her, gazed at her arms, her shoulders, now and then cast a glance at her rosy lips, at her softly-waving masses of hair.—At first he made very brief replies; he felt a certain obstruction in his throat and breast . . . but, little by little, this sensation was supplanted by another, which was still uneasy, but yet not devoid of a certain sweetness; he had not, in the least, expected that such a great and beautiful lady, such an aristocrat, would be capable of taking an interest in him, a simple student; but she not only took an interest in him—she seemed even to be flirting a little with him. Nezhdánoff asked himself to what end was she doing all this?—and found no answer; and, to tell the truth, he needed none. Madame Sipyágin began to talk about Kólya; she even began to assure Nezhdánoff that her sole reason for wishing to become more closely acquainted with him was that she might have a serious talk with him about her son—in general, to learn his ideas on the subject of educating Russian children. The suddenness with which this desire had arisen in her might have appeared somewhat strange. But the point did not lie in the least in what Valentína Mikhaílovna said, but in the fact that a sort of sensual impulse had overtaken her—the imperative neces-

sity of subjugating, of bringing to her feet this recalcitrant head, had cropped up in her. . . .

But at this point we must turn back for a little.

Valentína Mikhaílovna was the daughter of a very shallow-brained and not dashing general with one star, and a clasp for fifty years of service,—and of an extremely intriguing and crafty little Russian, endowed, like many of her compatriots, with an extremely simple-minded and stupid appearance, from which she contrived to extract the utmost possible profit. Valentína Mikhaílovna's parents were not wealthy; yet she had got into the Smólny Convent,[1] where, although she was regarded as a republican, she was prominent and held in good esteem, because she studied diligently and behaved herself in an exemplary manner. On graduating from the Smólny Institute, she settled down, in company with her mother—(her brother had gone off to the country; the general, with his star and his clasp, was already dead)—in a neat but very cold apartment: when people talked in that apartment, steam could be seen issuing from their mouths; Valentína Mikhaílovna laughed, and declared that it was "as it is in church." She bravely endured all the discomforts of a

[1] The most fashionable and select of the Government Institutes for the education of girls from aristocratic families: in St. Petersburg.—TRANSLATOR.

poor, circumscribed existence:—she had a wonderfully even temper. With her mother's aid she succeeded in keeping up her acquaintances and connections, and making new ones; every one spoke of her, even in the highest circles, as a very charming, very well-educated, and very decorous young girl. Valentína Mikhaílovna had several suitors; from among them all she chose Sipyágin, and made him love her very simply, promptly, and cleverly. . . . . Moreover, he speedily comprehended that he would not be able to find himself any better wife. She was clever, not ill-tempered . . . good-tempered rather, in reality cold and indifferent . . . . and never admitted the idea that any one could remain indifferent to her. Valentína Mikhaílovna was permeated with that special grace which is peculiar to "charming" egotists:—that grace contains neither poetry nor genuine sensibility, but does contain softness, sympathy, even tenderness. Only one must not thwart these fascinating egotists: they are greedy of power, and will not tolerate independence in others. Women like Madame Sipyágin arouse and agitate inexperienced and passionate men; they themselves love regularity and tranquillity of life. It is easy for them to be virtuous—they are cool-headed; but the constant desire to command, to attract, and to please imparts to them mobility and brilliancy: they have a strong will—and their very witchery depends

in part upon that strong will. . . . It is difficult for a man to resist, when little flames of apparently involuntary secret tenderness begin to attack such a dazzling, inaccessible creature; he waits in the expectation that the time may at any moment arrive when the ice will melt; but the brilliant ice merely sparkles with rays of light and does not melt, and it can never be disturbed!

It amounted to very little that Madame Sipyágin should flirt: she knew very well that she was, and could be, in no danger whatever. And, nevertheless, to make some one else's eyes alternately dim and flash, some one else's cheeks grow hot with desire and terrors, some one else's voice tremble and break, to disturb some one else's soul —oh, how sweet that was to *her* soul! How joyful it was to recall late at night, as she laid herself down in her pure bed for untroubled slumber,— to recall all those agitated words and glances and sighs. With what a satisfied smile did she then retreat completely into herself, into the conscious sensation of her inaccessibility, of her impregnability—and condescendingly surrender herself to the legitimate caresses of her well-trained husband! It was so agreeable that she even was touched at times, and was ready to do a good deed to help her neighbour. . . . Once upon a time she had founded a tiny almshouse after the secretary at one of the Embassies, who was madly in love with her, had tried to cut his throat! She

had prayed sincerely for him, although religious feeling had been weak in her from her earliest years.

So she chatted with Nezhdánoff, and endeavoured in every possible way to subjugate him "under her feet." She admitted him to her company, she even appeared to open her heart to him, and with pretty curiosity, with semi-maternal tenderness, watched this far from homely, and interesting and surly radical gently and awkwardly advance to meet her. A day, an hour, a minute later, and the whole thing would vanish, leaving no trace—but for the moment, she found it jolly, somewhat ridiculous, rather bothersome, —and even a little sad. Having forgotten his birth, and aware that that sort of attention is prized by lonely, shy men, Valentína Mikhaílovna undertook to interrogate Nezhdánoff about his youth, his family. . . But instantaneously divining, from his sharp and embarrassed replies, that she had got herself into a scrape, Valentína Mikhaílovna tried to efface her mistake, and became a trifle more expansive with him. . . . Thus does a blooming rose, in the languid heat of noonday, open out its fragrant petals, which the invigorating coolness of the night will soon close up and twist together again.

But she did not succeed in effacing her mistake altogether.—Touched on his sore spot, Nezhdánoff could no longer feel confidence as before.

The bitterness which he always bore about with him, which he always felt in the depths of his soul, began to stir again; his democratic suspicions and reproaches awoke once more.—"I did not come hither for this,"—he said to himself. Pákhlin's jesting injunctions recurred to his mind . . . . and he availed himself of the first moment of silence, rose from his seat, made a curt bow, and left the room—"very stupidly," as he involuntarily whispered to himself.

His agitation did not escape Valentína Mikhaílovna . . . but judging from the smile wherewith she watched him, she interpreted his confusion in a manner advantageous to herself.

In the billiard-room Nezhdánoff came upon Marianna. She was standing with her back to a window not far from the door of the boudoir, with her hands tightly clasped. Her face lay in a shadow that was almost black; but her bold eyes stared so interrogatively, so persistently at Nezhdánoff, her compressed lips expressed so much suspicion, such insulting pity, that he stopped short in perplexity. . . . .

"Do you wish to say anything to me?"—he involuntarily said.

Marianna did not immediately reply.

"No . . . or, yes; I do. Only not now."

"When?"

"Wait. Perhaps—to-morrow; perhaps—never.

You see, I know you very little—just what sort of a man you are."

"But,"—began Nezhdánoff,—"it has sometimes seemed to me . . . . that between us . . . . ."

"And you do not know me at all,"—broke in Marianna.—"So, wait. To-morrow, perhaps. But now I must go to my . . . . mistress. Farewell until to-morrow."

Nezhdánoff advanced a couple of paces,—but suddenly turned back.

"Akh, yes! Marianna Vikéntievna . . . . I have been wanting to ask you: will not you permit me to go with you to the school—to see how you occupy yourself there—before they close it?"

"If you like. . . Only it was not about the school that I wished to speak to you."

"What was it about, then?"

"Farewell until to-morrow,"—repeated Marianna.

But she did not wait until the morrow, and the conversation between her and Nezhdánoff came off that same evening, in one of the linden alleys which began not far from the terrace.

XIII

She herself was the first to approach him.

"Mr. Nezhdánoff,"—she began, in a hurried voice,—"you appear to be completely bewitched by Valentína Mikhaílovna?"

She turned away without waiting for an answer, and walked down the avenue; and he walked by her side.

"Why do you think so?"—he asked, after waiting a little.

"But is n't it true? If it is not, she has managed badly to-day. I can imagine what pains she took, and how she spread her little nets!"

Nezhdánoff uttered not a word, and only gazed askance at his strange interlocutor.

"Hearken,"—she went on:—"I am not going to dissemble: I do not like Valentína Mikhaílovna—and you know that very well. I may seem unjust to you . . . but you must first consider . . . ."

Marianna's voice broke. She blushed, she became agitated. . . Her agitation always assumed the aspect of ostensible anger.

"You are probably asking yourself,"—she began again,—"'Why does this young lady tell me this?' You must have thought the same thing

when I imparted to you the information . . . . concerning Mr. Markéloff."

She suddenly bent down, plucked a small mushroom, broke it in two, and flung it aside.

"You are mistaken, Marianna Vikéntievna," —said Nezhdánoff:—"on the contrary, I thought that I had inspired you with confidence —and that thought was very pleasant to me."

Nezhdánoff was not speaking the whole truth: that thought had only that moment entered his head.

Marianna instantly cast a glance at him. Up to that moment she had kept persistently turned away from him.

"It was not exactly that you inspired me with confidence,"—she said, as though considering the matter,—"for you are an utter stranger to me. . —But your position and my own are very similar. Both of us are equally unhappy; that is the bond which unites us."

"Are you unhappy?"—inquired Nezhdánoff.

"And you—are not you?"—replied Marianna.

He said nothing.

"Do you know my history?"—she began with animation:—"the history of my father? of his exile?—No? Well, then, you must know that he was arrested, found guilty, deprived of his rank . . . . . and of everything—and exiled to Siberia. Then he died . . . and my mother died also. My uncle, Mr. Sipyágin, my mother's bro-

ther, took charge of me—I am eating his bread—he is my benefactor and—Valentína Mikhaílovna is my benefactress—and I repay them with black ingratitude,—it must be because I have a hard heart—and another man's bread is bitter—and I cannot endure condescending insults—and I will not endure being patronised . . . and I cannot conceal my feelings—and when I am incessantly subjected to pin-pricks I refrain from crying out, merely because I am proud."

As she uttered these fragmentary remarks Marianna walked on faster and faster.

All at once she stopped short.

"Do you know that my aunt, merely with the object of getting rid of me, destines me to that detestable Kallomyeítzeff?—But she knows my convictions—I am a nihilist in her eyes—while he!—Of course he does not like me—you see that I am not handsome—but I may be sold. That, also, is a good deed!"

"Why do you . . . ." Nezhdánoff was beginning—and hesitated.

Marianna instantly glanced at him.

"Why have not I accepted Mr. Markéloff's proposal—you mean to say, don't you? Yes; but what am I to do? He is a good man. But I am not to blame; I do not love him."

Again Marianna walked on ahead, as though desirous of relieving her companion from the ob-

ligation to make any reply to this unexpected avowal.

They both reached the end of the avenue. Marianna turned briskly into a narrow path, which was laid out through a dense spruce-grove, and proceeded along it.—Nezhdánoff followed Marianna.—He felt doubly surprised: the manner in which this strange girl was suddenly talking with candour to him struck him as amazing,—and still more was he astonished that his candour did not in the least surprise him—that he regarded it as natural.

Marianna suddenly wheeled round—and halted in the middle of the path, so that her face was not more than a couple of feet from Nezhdánoff's face, and her eyes pierced directly into his eyes.

"Alexyéi Dmítritch,"—she said,—"do not think that my aunt is wicked. . . No! she is thoroughly—false, she is a comedian, she is fond of posing—she wants to have every one adore her—and worship her, as though she were a saint! She thinks up a cordial remark, and says it to one person,—and then she repeats that same remark to a second and a third person—and always with the same air, as though she had only just thought of it—and in connection with it, she uses her magnificent eyes! She knows herself perfectly well—she knows that she resembles a Madonna, and she loves no one! She pretends that she is always

worrying over Kólya—but all she does is to talk him over with clever people. She wishes no harm to any one . . . she is all benevolence!—But if they were to break all the bones in your body in her presence—she would not care a jot! She would not move a finger to rescue you;—but if it were necessary or profitable to herself . . . then . . . . oh, then!"

Marianna paused. Rancour was choking her; she had made up her mind to set it at liberty, she could not restrain herself—but her speech involuntarily broke off short. Marianna belonged to a peculiar category of unhappy people (they have begun to make their appearance pretty frequently in Russia). . . . Justice satisfies but does not gladden them; while injustice, to which they are frightfully sensitive, stirs them up to the very bottom of the soul.—While she was speaking Nezhdánoff gazed attentively at her; her reddened face, with her slightly dishevelled short hair, and the tremulous twitching of her thin lips, struck him as menacing and significant, —and beautiful. The sunlight, intercepted by the thick network of the branches, lay upon her brow in a slanting golden stain; and that fiery tongue harmonised with the excited expression of her whole countenance, with the widely-opened, fixed, and sparkling eyes, with the burning sound of her voice.

"Tell me,"—Nezhdánoff suddenly asked her,

—" why did you call me unhappy? Do you know anything about my past? "

Marianna nodded her head.

" Yes."

" That is to say . . . . what do you know? Has any one told you about me? "

" I know . . . about your birth."

" You know. . . Who told you? "

" Why, that same person—that same Valentína Mikhaílovna, with whom you are so enchanted. She did not omit to mention in my presence—as a passing remark, after her usual fashion, but still distinctly—not with pity, but as a woman of liberal views, who is above all prejudices—that such and such an accident existed in the life of our new tutor! Pray do not feel surprised: Valentína Mikhaílovna, in the same casual manner and with commiseration, imparts to almost every visitor that ' this sort of an . . . . accident . . exists in the life of my niece: her father was sent to Siberia for taking bribes.' No matter how much of an aristocrat she may consider herself to be, she is simply a scandal-monger and poseuse—that Raphael Madonna of yours! "

" Pray, why is she ' my ' Madonna? " remarked Nezhdánoff.

Marianna turned away, and again proceeded along the path.

" You and she had such a long conversation together,"—she said dully.

"I hardly uttered a single word,"—replied Nezhdánoff:—"she talked the whole time herself."

Marianna walked on in silence. But now the path made a turn to one side; the spruce-grove seemed to open out and reveal ahead a small glade with a hollow weeping birch in the centre, and a circular bench which surrounded the aged tree. Marianna seated herself on this bench; Nezhdánoff placed himself beside her. Over the heads of both long tufts of drooping boughs, covered with tiny green leaves, swayed gently to and fro. Round about among the sparse grass lilies-of-the-valley gleamed whitely, and from the whole glade welled up the fresh fragrance of the young herbage, which agreeably relieved the lungs, still oppressed by resinous exhalations.

"You wish to go with me to inspect the school here,"—began Marianna;—"well, let us go.—Only . . . I do not know. You will not take much satisfaction in it. You have heard: our head teacher is—the deacon. He is a good man, but you cannot imagine what things he talks about to his pupils! Among them is one boy . . . his name is Garásya—he is an orphan, ten years of age—and, just imagine! he studies better than all the rest!"

In suddenly changing the subject of conversation, Marianna herself seemed to undergo a change also: she turned pale and silent, and her

face expressed emotion, as though she were ashamed of all that she had been saying. Obviously, she wished to lead Nezhdánoff to some "question" or other—the school question, the question of the peasants—anything to avoid continuing in their former vein. But he was not in the mood for "questions" at that moment.

"Marianna Vikéntievna,"—he began, "I will say to you frankly: I never expected all this . . . that has taken place between us."—(At the words "taken place" she pricked up her ears a little.)—"It seems to me that we have suddenly come very close together. That is as it should be. We have been advancing toward each other for a long time; only, we have put it into words. —And therefore I will speak to you without concealment.—You find life difficult and painful in this house; but your uncle, although shallow-pated, is, so far as I can judge of him, a humane man? Does not he understand your position, does not he take your part?"

"My uncle? In the first place, he is not a man at all; he is an official—a senator,[1] or a Minister . . . I really do not know what. And, in the second place, . . . I do not care to complain and tell tales unnecessarily: I do not find life here difficult or painful in the least—that is to say, I am not persecuted here; my aunt's little

[1] A member of the Supreme Judicial Court.—TRANSLATOR.

pin-pricks are nothing to me, really . . . I am perfectly free."

Nezhdánoff cast a glance of surprise at Marianna.

"In that case . . . . everything that you have just been telling me . . . ."

"You are at liberty to laugh at me,"—she interposed:—"but if I am unhappy, it is not with my own unhappiness.—It sometimes seems to me that I suffer on behalf of all the oppressed, the poor, the wretched in Russia . . . no, I do not suffer . . . but I am indignant on their behalf, I rage . . . so that I am ready to lay down my life for them. I am unhappy because I am a young lady, a parasite, that I do not know how to do anything—anything whatever! When my father was in Siberia, and my mother and I remained in Moscow,—akh, how I longed to go to him!—and that, not because I either loved or respected him very much—but I did so want to find out for myself, to behold with my own eyes, how the exiles . . . . the persecuted . . . live . . . . And how vexed I was at myself, and at all those calm, well-to-do, satiated people! . . . . And then, when he came back, worn out, broken in health, and began to humble himself, to worry and search . . . akh . . how painful that was! How well it was that he died . . . and my mother also! But I remained alive. . . . To what end? In order to feel that I have a bad disposition, that

I am ungrateful, that no one can get on with me —and that I can do nothing, nothing—for anything or for any one!"

Marianna bent to one side—her hand slipped down on the bench. Nezhdánoff felt very sorry for her; he touched that hanging hand . . . but Marianna immediately jerked it away, not because Nezhdánoff's gesture struck her as improper, but lest he—which God forbid—should think that she was asking for sympathy.

A woman's garment glinted through the boughs of the spruce-grove.

Marianna straightened herself up.—"Look there, your Madonna has sent out her spy. That maid has to keep watch of me, and report to her mistress where I go, and with whom!—My aunt has probably guessed that I am with you,—considers it indecorous—especially after the sentimental scene which she acted out before you. And, in fact, it is time to go home. Let us set out."

Marianna rose; Nezhdánoff also rose from his seat. She glanced at him over her shoulder, and suddenly there flitted across her face an expression which was almost childlike, charming, rather confused.

"I hope you are not angry with me? You do not think that I, too, have been showing off to you?—No, you do not think so,"—she went on, before Nezhdánoff could make her any answer,—

"for you are just such another as myself,—an unhappy being,—and you, also, have a bad disposition, like myself.—And to-morrow we will go together to the school, because now, you know, we are good friends."

When Marianna and Nezhdánoff approached the house, Valentína Mikhaílovna was staring at them through her lorgnette from the elevation of the terrace—and, with her usual gentle smile, was shaking her head; and returning through the open glass door to the drawing-room, where Sipyágin was still sitting over his game of preference, with a toothless neighbour who had dropped in to tea, she said loudly, and in a deliberate drawl, separating syllable from syllable:

"How damp it is out of doors! It is un healthful!"

Marianna exchanged a glance with Nezhdánoff; but Sipyágin, who had just out-trumped his partner, cast at his wife a truly ministerial glance, obliquely and upward across his cheek—and then transferred that same sleepily cold, but penetrating glance to the young pair who had just entered from the dark garden.

XIV

Two weeks more passed.—Everything went on in its wonted routine. Sipyágin portioned out the daily duties—if not like a minister, then certainly like the director of a department—and bore himself, as before, loftily, humanely, and in a somewhat fastidious manner; Kólya took his lessons; Anna Zakhárovna was tormented with constant, oppressive spite; guests arrived, talked, waged battle at cards—and, to all appearances, were not bored; Valentína Mikhaílovna continued to trifle with Nezhdánoff—although something in the nature of good-natured irony had begun to mingle with her amiability. With Marianna, Nezhdánoff had become definitively on intimate terms—and, to his astonishment, he found that she had a tolerably even temper, and that it was possible to converse with her on every subject without coming into conflict with harsh contradictions.—In her company he twice visited the school,—but at his first visit he became convinced that there was nothing for him to do there. The reverend deacon taught reading and writing not badly, although in old-fashioned style—but at the examinations he propounded somewhat absurd questions; for

example, he one day asked Garásya: "how wilt thou explain the expression: 'the water is dark in the clouds?'"—to which Garásya replied, in accordance with information which must have been derived from the father deacon himself: "It is inexplicable." However, the school was soon closed,—on account of the summer season—until the autumn.—Calling to mind the exhortations of Pákhlin and others, Nezhdánoff endeavoured also to come into close relations with the peasants; but he speedily perceived that he was simply studying them to the extent of his own powers of observation—and not making propaganda at all! He had spent almost all his life in the town,—and between him and the country people there existed a gulf, or a ditch, across which he could in no wise leap. Nezhdánoff had occasion to exchange a few words with Kirílo the sot, and also with "Porpoise" Mendelyéi; but, strange to say, he seemed to feel timid in their presence, and with the exception of a very general and very curt curse, he got nothing from them. Another peasant—his name was Fitiúeff—simply drove him to his wits' end. This peasant had a remarkably energetic, almost brigand-like face. . . "Well, this fellow certainly must be trustworthy!"—said Nezhdánoff to himself. . . And what happened? Fitiúeff turned out to be a landless peasant: the Commune had deprived him of his land because he—a healthy and

even powerful man—*could not* work.—"I can't!"—sobbed Fitiúeff himself, with a deep, inward groan, heaving a long sigh:—"I can't work! kill me!—Or I 'll lay hands on myself!"—And he ended by asking alms—just a little copper for bread. . . And his face was like that of Rinaldo Rinaldi!—Nezhdánoff had no success whatever with the factory-hands; all those young fellows were either frightfully alert or frightfully gloomy . . . and nothing came of Nezhdánoff's efforts with them. In this connection, he wrote a long letter to his friend Sílin, in which he complained bitterly of his own ignorance, and attributed it to his own bad education and abominable æsthetic nature! He suddenly took it into his head that his vocation—in the matter of the propaganda—was to act, not with the living word of mouth, but by writing; but the pamphlets which he planned came to nothing. Everything which he tried to set down on paper produced upon himself the impression of something false, strained, untruthful in tone, in language,—and a couple of times, oh, horrors!—he involuntarily branched off into poetry, or into sceptical, personal effusions. He even made up his mind (an important token of confidence and intimacy!) . . . to speak of his ill-success to Marianna . . . . and again, to his surprise, he found in her sympathy—not for his literary productions, of course—but for that moral malady with which he was suffer-

ing, and which was no stranger to her. Marianna rebelled against æsthetics as strongly as he did;—and was that the real reason why she had not fallen in love with Markéloff and had not married him, that there was not a single trace of that æstheticism in him?—As a matter of course, Marianna did not dare to admit this even to herself; but, after all, only that is strong in us which remains to us ourselves a half-suspected secret.

And so the days ran on—slowly, unevenly, but not tediously.

Something strange took place in Nezhdánoff. He was dissatisfied with himself, with his activity—that is to say, with his lack of activity; his remarks almost always reeked of the gall and virulence of self-flagellation; but in his soul, somewhere, very far within, things were not so bad; he even experienced a certain sense of solace. Whether this was the result of the country tranquillity, the air, the summer, the savoury food, the comfortable existence,—whether it arose from the fact that, for the first time since he was born, it had fallen to his lot to taste the sweetness of contact with a feminine soul—it would be difficult to say; but, in reality, he felt light at heart, although he made complaint—genuine complaint—to his friend Sílin.

But this mood of Nezhdánoff's was suddenly and violently destroyed—in one day.

On the morning of that day he received a note

from Vasíly Nikoláevitch, in which he was ordered, in company with Markéloff,—while awaiting further instructions,—instantly to make acquaintance and come to an agreement with that Solómin who has already been mentioned, and with a certain merchant Golúshkin, an Old Ritualist,[1] who resided in S. This letter thoroughly disquieted Nezhdánoff: he detected in it a reproof for his inaction. The bitterness which, all that time, had been seething in his words alone, now rose once more in the depths of his soul.

Kallomyeítzeff came to dinner, preoccupied and irritable.—"Imagine,"—he cried, in a voice that was almost tearful,—"what a horror I have just read in the newspaper:—"my friend, my dear Mikhaílo, the Prince of Servia, has been murdered in Belgrade by some miscreants!—To what lengths will these Jacobins and revolutionists proceed, if we do not put a firm limit to them!"—Sipyágin "permitted himself to remark," that that abominable murder had not, in all probability, been committed by Jacobins—"who are not allowed in Servia,"—but by men of the Karageórgevitch party, the enemies of the Obrenóvitches. . . . But Kallomyeítzeff would hear to nothing, and in the same tearful voice he again began to narrate how the deceased prince

1 The Old Ritualists, or schismatics (raskólniki), are the sect which did not accept the necessary corrections of errors in the Scriptures and church service-books, made during the reign of Peter the Great's father.—Translator.

had loved him, and what a gun he had given him! . . . . Gradually waxing angry, and rising into a passion, Kallomyeítzeff turned from foreign Jacobins to domestic nihilists and socialists—and, at last, burst out into a regular invective. Grasping a large white roll in both hands, in fashionable style, and breaking it in two over his plate of soup, as the genuine Parisians do at the "Café Riche,"—he announced a desire to smash, to pulverise all those who offered opposition . . . to anything or anybody whatsoever! . . . That was precisely the way in which he expressed himself.—"It is time, high time!"—he kept repeating, as he put his spoon into his mouth:—"it is time, high time!" he insisted, as he held up his wine-glass to the servant who was pouring out the sherry. He alluded reverently to the great Moscow publicists—and *Ladislas, notre bon et cher Ladislas,* never left his tongue.—And all the while he kept fixing his gaze on Nezhdánoff, exactly as though he were saying familiarly to him with it.—"Here, take that! here 's a blow for thee! that 's aimed at thee! And here 's another!"—At last, the latter lost his patience—and began to retort—in a voice which trembled somewhat, it is true (of course, not with timidity), and was rather hoarse; he began to defend the hopes, the principles, the ideals of the young generation. Kallomyeítzeff instantly began to squeak—wrath always manifested itself in his case by a falsetto tone—and be-

came rude. Sipyágin majestically took Nezhdánoff's part; Valentína Mikhaílovna also agreed with her husband; Anna Zakhárovna began to divert Kólya's attention, and hurled angry glances, at random, from beneath her over-hanging cap; Marianna did not stir, and seemed to be petrified.

But all at once, on hearing the name of Ladislas uttered for the twentieth time, Nezhdánoff flared up thoroughly, and bringing his palm down on the table with a bang, exclaimed:

"So that 's your authority!—As though we did not know what sort of a fellow that Ladislas is!—He is a born instigator,—and nothing more!"

"A . . . a . . . ah . . . so that 's it . . . that 's . . . what you 're driving at!"—groaned Kallomyeítzeff, stammering with rage. . . . "You permit yourself to speak thus of a man whom personages like Count Bismarck and Prince Kovrízhkin respect!"

Nezhdánoff shrugged his shoulders.—"A fine recommendation: Prince Kovrízhkin, that lackey-enthusiast. . . . ."

"Ladislas is my friend,"—shrieked Kallomyeítzeff,—"he is my comrade—and I . . ."

"So much the worse for you,"—interrupted Nezhdánoff;—"that signifies that you share his mode of thought, and so my words refer also to you."

Kallomyeítzeff turned deadly pale with rage.

—"Wha . . . . wha-at? What do you mean? How dare you? You ou . . . ought . . . to be immediately . . . ."

"What is it your pleasure to do with me *immediately?*"—interrupted Nezhdánoff for the second time, with ironical politeness.

God knows how this fray between the two enemies would have ended, had not Sipyágin put a stop to it in its very inception. Raising his voice, and assuming a mien, as to which it cannot be said whether there predominated in it the importance of the statesman or the dignity of the master of the house—he announced, with firm composure, that he did not wish to hear such intemperate expressions at his table; that he had long since established a rule (he corrected himself, "a sacred rule"), for himself, to respect every sort of conviction, but only on condition—(here he raised his forefinger, adorned with a signet-ring), that they should be confined within certain limits of propriety and decorum; that if he, on his side, could not help condemning in Mr. Nezhdánoff a certain intemperance of language, which, moreover, was to be excused on account of his youth, on the other hand, neither could he lend his approbation to Mr. Kallomyeítzeff in the harshness of his attack on persons of the opposite camp —a harshness which was to be explained, however, by his zeal for the public welfare.

"Beneath my roof,"—thus he wound up,—

" beneath the roof of the Sipyágins there are no Jacobins, no instigators, but there are only conscientious people, who, one of these days will embrace one another, and will, infallibly, end by shaking hands with one another!"

Nezhdánoff and Kallomyeítzeff both relapsed into silence—but they did not shake hands with each other. On the contrary, never before had they felt such a strong mutual hatred. The dinner ended in a disagreeable and awkward silence; Sipyágin made an effort to narrate a diplomatic anecdote—but abandoned it half-way through. Marianna stared persistently at her plate. She did not wish to exhibit the sympathy aroused in her by Nezhdánoff's remarks, not out of pusillanimity—oh, no; but the first thing of all was, not to betray herself to Madame Sipyágin. And, as a matter of fact, Madame Sipyágin never took her eyes off of her—off of her and Nezhdánoff. His unexpected outburst had at first astonished the clever lady; afterward, a sudden light seemed to dawn upon her—and so forcibly, that she whispered involuntarily:—" Ah!" . . . She suddenly divined that Nezhdánoff had turned away from her, that same Nezhdánoff, who so recently had been falling into her clutches. Something had happened. . . Was not Marianna responsible? Yes, it certainly was Marianna. . . He pleased her . . . yes, and he . . . .

" I must take measures," so she concluded her

meditations, and, in the meantime, Kallomyeítzeff was choking with rage. Even while playing at preference, two hours later, he uttered the words: " I pass! " or " I draw! " with an aching heart—and in his voice the dull tremolo of affront was audible, although he made a show of " scorning it."—Sipyágin alone was, properly speaking, extremely satisfied with himself, with this entire scene. He had had an opportunity to display the force of his eloquence, and of stilling the rising storm. . . . He knew the Latin tongue, and Virgil's phrase, *" Quos ego! "* was not unfamiliar to him. He did not consciously compare himself to Neptune; but somehow, he called him to mind in a sympathetic way.

XV

As soon as he found it possible, Nezhdánoff betook himself to his chamber, and locked himself in!—He did not wish to see any one—not any one whatever, except Marianna. Her room was situated at the very end of a long corridor, which intersected the entire upper story. Nezhdánoff had entered it only once—and that for only a few moments; but it seemed to him, that she would not be offended with him if he were to knock at her door, that she even wished to talk over matters with him. It was already rather late, about ten o'clock; the host and hostess, after the scene which had taken place at dinner, had not thought it right to disturb him, and had continued to play cards with Kallomyeítzeff. Valentína Mikhaílovna inquired for Marianna a couple of times as she, also, had disappeared after dinner.—"Where is Marianna Vikéntievna?"—she asked, first in Russian, then in French, not addressing herself to any one in particular, but rather to the walls, as very much surprised people are wont to do; but she soon became engrossed in her game.

Nezhdánoff paced up and down his room several times, then went down the corridor, toward

Marianna's door, and knocked softly. There was no response. He knocked again—he tried to open the door. . . It turned out to be locked. But before he could regain his own room, and seat himself on a chair, his own door creaked faintly, and Marianna's voice made itself heard.

"Alexyéi Dmítritch, was it *you* who came to my room?"

He instantly sprang up and rushed into the corridor; Marianna was standing in front of the door, with a candle in her hand, pale and motionless.

"Yes . . . it was I . . ." he whispered.

"Come,"—she replied, and went down the corridor; but before reaching the end, she halted, and thrust open with her hand a low door. Nezhdánoff beheld a small, almost empty room.—"It is better for us to come in here, Alexyéi Dmítritch, no one will disturb us here." Nezhdánoff obeyed, Marianna set the candle down on the window-sill and turned to Nezhdánoff.

"I understand why you wished to see me, in particular,"—she began:—"You find life in this house very difficult—and so do I."

"Yes; I wanted to see you, Marianna Vikéntievna,"—replied Nezhdánoff;—"but I have not found things difficult here, since I came to know you well."

Marianna smiled thoughtfully.

"Thank you, Alexyéi Dmítritch—but tell me,

is it possible that you intend to remain here after all these outrageous proceedings?"

"I think I shall not be allowed to remain here,—I shall be dismissed!"—replied Nezhdánoff.

"And you will not resign of your own accord?"

"Of my own accord. . . . No."

"Why?"

"Do you wish to know the truth? Because *you* are here."

Marianna bowed her head, and retreated a little further into the depths of the room.

"And, more than that,"—pursued Nezhdánoff,—"I am *bound* to remain here. You know nothing—but I wish, I feel that I ought to tell you everything."—He stepped up to Marianna, and seized her hand.—She did not take it away—and merely looked him in the face.—"Listen!"—he exclaimed with a sudden, mighty impulse.—"Listen to me!"—And immediately, without seating himself on one of the two or three chairs which were in the room, and continuing to stand in front of Marianna, and to hold her hand, Nezhdánoff with enthusiasm, with warmth, with an eloquence which was unexpected even to himself, communicated to Marianna his plans, his intentions, the reason he had accepted Sipyágin's proposal,—all his connections, acquaintances, his past, everything which he had been wont to conceal, which he had never told to any one! He

mentioned the letters he had received from Vasíly Nikoláevitch, everything—even Sílin!—he talked hurriedly, without hesitation, without the slightest faltering—as though he reproached himself for not having hitherto initiated Marianna into all his secrets—as though he were excusing himself to her.—She listened to him attentively, eagerly; at first she was surprised. . . But that sensation immediately vanished. Gratitude, pride, devotion, decision—was what filled her face to overflowing. Her face, her eyes beamed; she laid her other hand on Nezhdánoff's hand—her lips opened in ecstasy. . . She had suddenly grown terribly beautiful.

He stopped at last—glanced at her, and it seemed as though he beheld for the first time *that* face, which was also so dear and so familiar to him.

He heaved a profound, a mighty sigh. . .

"Akh, how well I have done to tell you all!"—his lips were barely able to articulate.

"Yes, you have done well . . you have done well!"—she repeated, also in a whisper. She involuntarily imitated him—and her voice died away.—"And, of course, you know," she went on,—"that I am at your disposal, that I also wish to be of use in your affair, that I am ready to do everything that is necessary, to go anywhere that I may be ordered, that I always, with all my soul, have wished the same as you. . ."

She, too, fell silent. One word more—and tears of emotion would have gushed from her eyes. Her whole sturdy being had suddenly become as soft as wax. The thirst for activity, for sacrifice, for immediate sacrifice—that was what was causing her to languish.

Some one's footsteps approached the door—cautious, swift, light footsteps. Marianna suddenly drew herself up, released her hands—and immediately underwent a complete change, and grew merry. A scornful, even an audacious expression flitted across her face.

"I know who is eavesdropping on us at this moment,"—she said so loudly that her every word re-echoed plainly in the corridor—"Madame Sipyágin is listening to us . . . but I care nothing for that."

The rustle of footsteps ceased.

"So what now?"—Marianna turned to Nezhdánoff; "what am I to do? how can I help you? Speak . . . . speak quickly! What am I to do?"

"What?"—said Nezhdánoff.—"I do not yet know myself. . . . I have received a note from Markéloff. . ."

"When? When?"

"This evening. I must go to-morrow with him to Solómin, at the works."

"Yes . . . yes. . . . He 's a splendid man,—Markéloff. There 's a real friend!"

"The same as myself?"

Marianna looked Nezhdánoff straight in the face.

"No—not the same."

"How then?"

She suddenly turned away.

"Akh! but is it possible that you do not know what you have become to me, and what I feel at this moment. . . ."

Nezhdánoff's heart suddenly began to beat violently, and his gaze involuntarily dropped. That young girl, who had fallen in love with him,—with him, a homeless wretch,—who was trusting herself to him, who was ready to follow him, to advance with him to one and the same goal,—that splendid girl—Marianna—at that moment became for Nezhdánoff the incarnation of everything good, everything upright on the earth—the incarnation of family, love, the love of sister, of wife, which he had never known,—the incarnation of his native land, of happiness, of struggle, of freedom!

He raised his head—and beheld her eyes again directed upon him. . . .

Oh, how their bright, glorious gaze penetrated into the very depths of his soul!

"So,"—he began in an uncertain voice,—"I set out to-morrow. . . . And when I come back, I will tell . . . . you . . ." (he suddenly found it embarrassing to call Marianna "you")—"I

will tell you what I have learned, what has been decided upon. Henceforth, everything that I shall do, everything that I shall think—everything, everything, shall first be known to . . . . thee."

"Oh, my friend!"—exclaimed Marianna—and again she grasped his hand. "I make thee the same promise!"

That "thee" she uttered as easily and as simply as though it were not possible to do otherwise—as though it were a comradely, "thou."

"And may I see the letter?"

"Here it is, here."

Marianna glanced over the letter, and raised her eyes to him, almost with reverence.

"Do they impose such weighty commissions on thee?"

He smiled at her by way of reply, and thrust the letter into his pocket.

"It is strange,"—he said:—"here we have made a confession of love to each other—we love each other—and there has not been a word of that between us."

"Why should there be?"—whispered Marianna, and suddenly flung herself on his neck, and pressed her head to his shoulder. . . . But they did not even kiss each other—that would have been commonplace and awkward, for some reason or other—at least, that was the way they both

felt about it—and they immediately parted, with a mutual warm pressure of the hand.

Marianna returned for the candle, which she had left on the window-sill of the empty room—and only then did something in the nature of surprise overwhelm her. She extinguished the light, and, in profound darkness, swiftly slipped along the corridor, returned to her chamber, undressed, and lay down in that darkness which was so delightful to her, for some reason or other.

XVI

On the following morning, when Nezhdánoff awoke, he not only did not feel any confusion at the recollection of what had taken place on the preceding day,—but, on the contrary, he was filled with a certain good and sober joy, as though he had done something which, in reality, he ought to have done long ago. Asking leave of absence for a couple of days from Mr. Sipyágin, who gave immediate, but stern consent to his absence —Nezhdánoff went off to Markéloff. Before his departure, he contrived to see Marianna.— She, also, was not in the least ashamed, wore a calm and decided look, and coolly called him *thou*. She was disturbed merely over what he would hear from Markéloff, and begged him to tell her everything.

"That is a matter of course,"—replied Nezhdánoff.

"And, in fact,"—he said to himself,—"what occasion is there for us to worry? In our friendship personal feeling has played a secondary part—yet we have become irrevocably bound together. In the name of the cause? Yes, in the name of the cause!"

Thus thought Nezhdánoff,—and he himself did not suspect how much of truth—and of untruth—there was in his thoughts.

He found Markéloff in the same languid and morose frame of mind. When they had dined, after a fashion, on something or other, they set out in the tarantás with which we are already acquainted—(Markéloff's horse was still lame, and they had hired a second side horse, which was very young, and had never yet worked in harness, from a peasant)—to the big cotton-spinning factory of merchant Falyéeff, where Solómin lived. Nezhdánoff's curiosity was excited; he was very anxious to make closer acquaintance with the man, concerning whom he had heard so much of late. Solómin had been forewarned; as soon as the two travellers drew up at the gate of the factory, and mentioned their names, they were immediately conducted to the plain little wing occupied by the "mechanician-superintendent." He himself was in the main building of the factory; while one of the factory-hands ran to fetch him, Nezhdánoff and Markéloff had time to step to the window and look about them. The factory was, obviously, in a most thriving condition, and overwhelmed with work; thence emanated a brisk hum and roar of incessant activity: the machinery panted and pounded, the wheels whirred, the straps slapped, wheelbarrows, casks, laden carts rolled past and vanished from sight; shouts of

command, the clangour of bells and whistles rang out; workmen, in belted blouses, their long hair confined with a strap, working-girls, in print gowns, ran hurriedly past; horses in harness were moving about. Human force, a thousand men strong, roared round about as taut as a string. Everything was proceeding in an orderly, rational manner, in full swing; not only was there no elegance or punctuality observable, there was not even cleanliness anywhere or in anything; on the contrary—in every direction one was struck with the negligence, dirt, soot; here a window-pane was broken, there the plaster had peeled off, boards were missing, a gate yawned wide-open; a huge, black pool, with an iridescent scum of putrid matter stood in the middle of the main courtyard; further on, heaps of discarded bricks reared themselves aloft; fragments of linden-bast sacking, of raw-hide wrappers, packing-cases, ropes, were lying about; shaggy dogs were roaming around with hollow bellies, and not even barking; in one corner, under the fence, sat a little boy, four years of age, with a huge belly, and dishevelled head, all smeared with soot,—there he sat and wept desperately, as though abandoned by the whole world; alongside him, smeared with the same soot, a sow, surrounded by her piebald litter, was devouring cabbage-stalks; ragged underclothing was dangling on a line which had been stretched—and what stench, what a fetid

atmosphere there was everywhere!—A Russian factory—in short; not a German or a French manufactory.

Nezhdánoff cast a glance at Markéloff.

"I have been told so much about Solómin's superior capacities,"—he began,—"that, I must confess, this disorder surprises me; I had not expected it."

"There 's no disorder here,"—replied Markéloff, gruffly,—"but only Russian slovenliness. Nevertheless, the business earns millions! And he has to adapt himself to old customs,—and to business,—and to the owner himself. Have you any idea what Falyéeff is like?"

"None whatever."

"He 's the worst skinflint in Moscow. In one word—a miserly curmudgeon."

At that moment Solómin entered the room. Nezhdánoff was obliged to undergo a disenchantment, just as he had with regard to the factory. At first sight, Solómin produced the impression of being a Finn, or, rather, a Swede. He was lofty of stature, tow-headed, thin, broad-shouldered; he had a long, yellow face, a short, broad nose, very small greenish eyes, a calm gaze, thick lips which curled upward; white teeth, also large, and a cleft chin barely overgrown with down. He was dressed like a workman, a stoker; on his body he wore an old pea-jacket with pendent pockets, on his head an oil-cloth crushed cap, on his neck

a woollen scarf, on his feet tarred boots. He was accompanied by a man of forty, in a plain, long, peasant coat, with remarkably mobile, gipsy face and piercing, coal-black eyes, with which, as soon as he entered, he took a comprehensive survey of Nezhdánoff. . . . He already knew Markéloff. His name was Pável: he was regarded as Solómin's factotum.

Solómin approached his two visitors in a leisurely manner, pressed the hand of each of them with his calloused, bony hand, took out of the table-drawer a sealed packet, and handed it, still in silence, to Pável, who immediately left the room. Then he stretched and yawned; flinging his cap off the nape of his neck to a distance, with one sweep of his hand, he seated himself on a small painted wooden chair, and motioning Markéloff and Nezhdánoff to a divan of the same sort, he said:—"Pray, be seated!"

Markéloff first introduced Solómin and Nezhdánoff; Solómin immediately gave the latter his hand again.—Then Markéloff began to talk of "the cause," mentioned Vasíly Nikoláevitch's letter. Nezhdánoff gave the letter to Solómin. While he read it, attentively and without haste, moving his eyes from line to line, Nezhdánoff looked at him. Solómin was sitting near the window; the sun, which was already low in the sky, brilliantly illuminated his tanned, slightly perspiring face, his blond, dusty hair, kindling in

it a multitude of golden points. His nostrils quivered and became inflated as he read, and his lips moved as though he were articulating every word; he held the letter tightly and high up, with both hands. All this pleased Nezhdánoff,—God knows why. Solómin returned the letter to Nezhdánoff, smiled at him, and again began to listen to Markéloff. The latter talked and talked—and at last relapsed into silence.

"Do you know what,"—began Solómin, and his voice, which was rather hoarse, but young and strong, also pleased Nezhdánoff,—"I do not feel quite at my ease here; let us go to your house—it is only seven versts away. You came in a tarantás, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Well . . . . there will be room for me. In an hour my labours are over, and I shall be free. Then we will discuss. You are also free?"—he asked, turning to Nezhdánoff.

"Until day after to-morrow."

"Very good, indeed. We will spend the night with him.—May we, Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch?"

"What a question! Of course you may."

"Well—I 'll be ready directly. Only give me a chance to clean myself up a bit."

"And how are things going in your factory?"—inquired Markéloff, significantly. Solómin glanced aside.

"We will talk that over,"—he said again.—

"Wait . . . . I 'll be ready directly . . I have forgotten something."

He left the room. If it had not been for the good impression which he had produced on Nezhdánoff, the latter, probably would have thought, and even, perhaps, would have asked Markéloff: "Is n't he crawling out of it?" But nothing of that sort entered his head.

An hour later, at the moment when, from all the stories of the huge building, the noisy throng of work-people were descending by all the staircases and pouring out through all the doors,—the tarantás in which sat Markéloff, Nezhdánoff, and Solómin drove out through the gate upon the highway.

"Vasíly Feodótitch! Are we to act?"—shouted after Solómin, Pável, whom he had escorted to the gate.

"Wait a bit," . . . replied Solómin.—"That refers to a piece of night-work,"—he explained to his comrades.

They arrived at Borzyónkovo; they supped—chiefly for the sake of appearances—and then lit their cigars and began their discussions, those nocturnal, interminable, Russian discussions, which in such proportions and in such a form can hardly be characteristic of any other race whatsoever. Moreover, even here, Solómin did not justify Nezhdánoff's expectations. He talked remarkably little . . . so little, that one might almost

say that he remained persistently mute; but he listened assiduously, and if he did utter any judgment or remark, it was to the point, and of weight, and very brief. It appeared that Solómin did not believe in the imminent approach of a revolution in Russia; but, not wishing to force his opinions on others, he did not prevent their making the effort, and he looked on, not from afar, but from one side. He was well acquainted with the Petersburg revolutionists—and, to a certain degree, sympathised with them—for he himself was one of the people; but he understood the involuntary absence of that same people, without which "you will not be able to do anything," and which must undergo a long course of preparation,—and not of the same sort or with the same object as those. Hence, he held himself aloof, not as a crafty man or a shuffler, but as a young fellow with sense, who does not wish to ruin himself or others for nothing.—But as for listening—why not listen—and even learn, if the opportunity should present itself? Solómin was the only son of a chanter; he had five sisters—all married to priests and deacons; but he, with the consent of his father, a dignified and sober man, had abandoned the ecclesiastical seminary, had begun to study mathematics, and had conceived a special passion for mechanics; he had got a place in the factory of an Englishman, who had loved him like a son—and had furnished him with means

to go to Manchester, where he had remained two years, and had learned the English language. He had entered the factory of the Moscow merchant quite recently, and although he was strict with the factory-hands,—because he had learned that method by observation in England,—yet he enjoyed their good-will; "he was one of themselves, you see!" His father was greatly pleased with him, called him "accurate," and his sole regret was that his son was not inclined to marry.

In the course of the nocturnal discussion at Markéloff's, Solómin, as we have already said, maintained an almost uninterrupted silence; but when Markéloff undertook to expatiate upon the hopes which he founded on the factory workmen, Solómin, according to his wont, laconically remarked that "our factory-hands in Russia are not like those abroad—they are the quietest sort of folks."

"And the peasants?"—asked Markéloff.

Solómin smiled.

"Seek and ye shall find."

He smiled almost incessantly—and his smile, also, was a guileless sort of smile, but thoughtless, like everything else about him.—He treated Nezhdánoff in a peculiar manner: the young student aroused sympathy, almost tenderness in him.

In the course of that same nocturnal conversation, Nezhdanoff suddenly waxed warm, and became excited; Solómin quietly rose to his feet,

and traversing the whole length of the room with his long stride, shut the small window which stood open obove Nezhdánoff's head. . . .

"I 'm afraid you will take cold in your head," —he said good-naturedly, in reply to the orator's astonished look.

Nezhdánoff began to interrogate him as to the nature of the socialistic ideas which he was endeavouring to introduce into the factory intrusted to him, and as to whether he intended to arrange matters in such a way that the workmen should share in the profits?

"My dear soul!"—replied Solómin—"we have set up a school, and a small hospital—and the proprietor fought against them like a bear!"

Once only Solómin got seriously angry, and thumped his mighty fist on the table in such wise, that everything on it danced, not excluding the forty-pound weight, which sought refuge near the inkstand. They had told him about some piece of injustice in the law-courts, about the oppression of a workman's guild. . . .

But when Markéloff and Nezhdánoff undertook to say, how it was proper to "set to work," how their plan was to be put into action, Solómin continued to listen with curiosity, even with respect—but he himself did not utter a single word. This conversation of theirs lasted until four o'clock.—And what all did they not discuss! Markéloff, among other things, secretly hinted at

that indefatigable traveller, Kislyakóff, at his letters, which were becoming more and more interesting; he promised to show several of them to Nezhdánoff, and even to give him some to take home with him, as they were very long, and written in a not very legible hand; and, in addition, they contained a great deal of learning, and there were even verses here and there—but not any frivolous verses—and with a socialistic tendency.—From Kislyakóff Markéloff passed on to soldiers, to adjutants, to Germans—and, at last, talked until he reached the artillery articles; Nezhdánoff referred to the antagonism which existed between Heine and Prudhomme, to realism in art; and Solómin listened—listened, observed, smoked,—and without ever ceasing to smile, without uttering a single witty word, he seemed to comprehend better than any of them, in what the whole gist of the matter consisted.

The clock struck four. . . Nezhdánoff and Markéloff could hardly stand on their feet with weariness—but Solómin never showed a trace of fatigue!—The friends parted; but before they did so it was unanimously agreed that on the following day they should go to the town, to the Old Ritualist merchant Golúshkin to make propaganda; Golúshkin himself was very zealous—and had promised proselytes! Solómin ventured to express a doubt: was it worth while to visit Golúshkin? But afterward he agreed that it was.

XVII

Markéloff's guests were still asleep when a messenger presented himself to him, with a letter from his sister, Madame Sipyágin.—In that letter Valentína Mikhaílovna spoke to him about some domestic trifles, asked him to send her a book which he had taken away—and, by the way, in a postscript, she imparted to him an "amusing" bit of news: his former flame, Marianna, had fallen in love with the tutor Nezhdánoff—and the tutor with her; and she, Valentína Mikhaílovna was not repeating gossip,—but had beheld it with her own eyes, and had heard it with her own ears. Markéloff's face grew blacker than night . . . . but he uttered not a word;—he ordered that the book be given to the messenger,—and, catching sight of Nezhdánoff, who was descending the stairs from the upper story, he greeted him in the usual manner—he even gave him the packet of Kislyakóff's epistles, which he had promised;—but he did not remain with him, and went off "to see to affairs about the place."—Nezhdánoff returned to his room and ran through the letters which had been given to him: in them the young propagandist talked continu-

ally of himself, of his convulsive activity; according to his statements, in the course of the last month he had raced across eleven districts, had been in nine towns, twenty-two villages, fifty-three hamlets, one farm, and eight factories; sixteen nights he had spent in hay-mows, one night in a stable, one, even, in a cow-stall (here he remarked in parenthesis, with a *nota bene,* that the fleas had not bothered him); he had made his way into the earth-huts, the barracks of the workingmen, everywhere he had taught, exhorted, distributed little books, collected information on the fly; some persons he had jotted down on the spot, others he had impressed on his memory, according to the latest system of mnemonics; he had written fourteen long letters, twenty-eight short ones, and eighteen notes, four of them in pencil, one in blood, one in soot diluted with water; and all this he had succeeded in doing because he had learned how to portion out his time systematically, taking as his guides Quintin Johnson, Sverlítzky, Karelius, and other journalists and article-writers. —Then he talked some more about himself, about his star, about precisely how and in what particulars he had supplemented Fourier's theory of the passions; he asserted that he had been the first to seek out "the soil," definitively, that "he would not pass through the world without leaving a trace behind him,"—that he himself was amazed that he, a youth of two-and-twenty, had already

solved all the problems of life and science—and that he would turn Russia upside down, he would even " give it a shaking-up! "—Dixi!!—he added at the end of the line.—This word—" dixi " . . frequently recurred in Kislyakóff's letters, and always with two exclamation points. One of the letters contained a socialistic poem, addressed to a young girl, and beginning:

Love not me—but the idea!

Nezhdánoff was inwardly amazed, not so much by Mr. Kislyakóff's self-boastfulness, as at Markéloff's honest good-nature . . . . but he immediately reflected: " away with æsthetics! even Mr. Kislyakóff may prove useful! "—All three friends met in the dining-room at tea; but the wordy discussion of the preceding evening was not renewed between them.—None of them felt inclined to talk—but Solómin alone maintained a composed silence; while Nezhdánoff and Markéloff seemed to be inwardly perturbed.

After tea they set out for the town; Markéloff's old servant, as he sat on the porch, accompanied his former master with his customary dejected gaze.

Merchant Golúshkin,—whose acquaintance Nezhdánoff was about to make,—was the son of a tradesman, who had acquired wealth in the hardware business, a member of the Feodosian sect,

of the Old Ritualists.[1] He himself had not augmented his father's property, for he was, as has been stated, a gay blade, an epicurean, after the Russian manner—and possessed no gift whatever of combination in business matters. He was a man of forty years of age, decidedly obese and homely, pock-marked, with small, pig eyes; he talked very fast, and got tangled up, as it were, in his words, flourished his hands, danced about on his legs, burst out laughing . . . . in general, produced the impression of a dull-witted, spoiled, and extremely conceited fellow. He regarded himself as a cultured man, because he dressed in foreign fashion and lived in a free-handed, though slovenly manner, was acquainted with wealthy people,—and went to the theatre, and protected variety actresses, with whom he conversed in a remarkable sort of language which professed to be French. A thirst for popularity was his chief passion; as much as to say:—"Let thy fame resound throughout the world, Golúshkin!" —This same passion, having won the victory over his innate stinginess, had flung him, as he expressed it, not without pride, into the opposition (formerly, he had said simply: "into position,"—but he had been taught better afterward), —had brought him into relations with the nihilists: he proclaimed the most extreme opinions,

[1] For a good description of this and the other Old Ritualist sects, see "L'Empire des Tsars et les Russes," by Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu. —TRANSLATOR.

he jeered at his Old Ritualistic sect, ate prohibited food during fasts, played cards—and drank champagne like water. And he was continually getting out of scrapes:—because, as he said—"I have bought the authorities in every direction where it is necessary; every opening has been stopped up, all mouths are closed, all ears plugged."—He was a widower, and childless; his sister's sons hovered around him with servile trepidation . . . but he cursed them for a pack of uncivilised blockheads and barbarians, and hardly permitted them to come within his sight.—He lived in a large stone house, which was kept up in rather an untidy manner; in some of the rooms there was foreign furniture—and in others, there was nothing but painted chairs, and a sofa covered with oil-cloth. Pictures hung everywhere—and all of them were exceedingly bad: carroty-hued landscapes, and purple sea views—Moller's "The Kiss," fat, naked women with red knees or elbows. Although Golúshkin had no family, a great many menials and parasites roosted under his roof; he did not harbour them out of generosity, but for the same old reason,—a desire for popularity,—and in order that he might have some one whom he could order about, and before whom he could put on airs. "My clients," he was wont to say, when he wanted to throw dust in any one's eyes; he read no books, but he had a capital memory for learned expressions.

The young men found Golúshkin in his study. Clad in a long-tailed paletot, with a cigar in his mouth, he was pretending to read a newspaper. At the sight of them he instantly sprang to his feet, fussed about, turned scarlet, shouted out that the servants were to serve luncheon immediately, put some question or other, laughed at something—and all simultaneously. He knew Markéloff and Solómin; Nezhdánoff was an entirely new person to him. On hearing that he was a student, he shook hands with him again and said:

"Splendid! splendid! some of our own set have arrived . . . . learning is light, ignorance is darkness—my own education leaves much to be desired, but I understand, because I 've been successful!"

It struck Nezhdánoff that Mr. Golúshkin was both timid and easily discomfited, . . and, as a matter of fact, he was exactly that.—"Look out, brother Kapíton, keep up thy dignity!" was his first thought at the sight of every new face. But he speedily recovered himself, and began to talk in the same hurried, thick-tongued way about Vasíly Nikoláevitch, about his character, about the necessity for the pro-pa-gan-da—(he was very familiar with this word, but he pronounced it slowly); he said that he, Golúshkin, had discovered a new, dashing young man, a very trustworthy fellow; that apparently the time was now near at hand, the time was ripe for . . . . for

the lancet (at this, he glanced at Markéloff, who, however, never fluttered an eyelash);—then, addressing himself to Nezhdánoff, he began to portray himself in a style quite equal to that of Kislyakóff, the great correspondent, himself. He, said he, had long ago got out of the category of self-fools,[1] that he knew well the rights of the proletariat (he had memorised this word thoroughly), that, although he himself had retired from business and was engaged in banking operations—for the purpose of augmenting his capital—yet this was only in order that this capital might, at a given moment, serve—to the profit . . . to the profit of the general movement, to the profit—so to speak—of the populace; and that he, Golúshkin, in reality, despised capital! At this point, a servant entered with the appetiser, and Golúshkin clearing his throat significantly, inquired whether they would not like to join him in a glass?—and was himself the first to toss off an overpowering bumper of pepper-brandy.

The guests began on the luncheon.—Golúshkin thrust huge pieces of pressed caviar into his mouth, and drank to match, remarking:—"Pray, gentlemen, take some, I entreat you, 'it is a tidbit'!"

[1] Ostróvsky, the famous dramatic writer, invented this word—*samodur*, self-fool—in his well-known comedy, "Don't Bother about Other People's Troubles" (literally, "Getting Drunk at Another Man's Feast"). It instantly became the popular term to describe a pig-headed, conservative, old-fashioned man.—TRANSLATOR.

Addressing himself once more to Nezhdánoff, he asked him whence he had come, whether he intended to remain long, and where he was residing; and having learned that he was living at Sipyágin's house, he exclaimed:

"I know that gentleman! An empty fellow!" —And thereupon began to revile all landed proprietors of the S. . . . Government, because they not only had nothing of the citizen about them, but also because they were not even conscious of their own interests. . . . Only—strange to say! . . while he was thus abusing them,—his eyes kept roving about, and uneasiness was visible in them.—Nezhdánoff could not quite render himself an account as to what manner of man this was—and why he should be necessary to them. Solómin held his tongue, according to his wont; and Markéloff assumed such a gloomy mien, that Nezhdánoff at last asked him "what was the matter with him?"—To which Markéloff replied that there was nothing the matter with him; but in the sort of tone in which it is customary to answer people when the object is to give them to understand that "there is something the matter—only it is none of your business."—Again Golúshkin began, first to abuse somebody, and then to laud the young generation: "what clever fellows have come up nowadays! Cle-e-ver fellows! Phew!" —Solómin interrupted him with the query: who was that reliable young man whom he had men-

tioned?—and where had he hunted him up? Golúshkin burst out into a hearty laugh, repeated a couple of times: "Well now, you 'll see, you 'll see,"—and began to interrogate him about his factory, and its "rascally" owner, to which Solómin replied in extremely monosyllabic style. Then Golúshkin poured out champagne for all of them—and bending down to Nezhdánoff's ear, he whispered:—"To the republic!"—and drained his glass at a draught. Nezhdánoff took a sip from his glass. Solómin remarked that he did not drink wine in the morning; Markéloff drained his glass to the dregs, with a vicious and determined air. It seemed as though he were being devoured by impatience: "here we are, still taking our ease," he seemed to say,—"and we are not getting at the real discussion at all." . . . . He thumped the table, said morosely:—"Gentlemen!"—and was preparing to speak. . . .

But at that moment there entered the room a smoothly-licked man, with a jug-like phiz, and a consumptive aspect, dressed in a short nankeen kaftan of the merchant fashion, with both arms dangling straight down. Having made his bow to all present this man reported something to Golúshkin in a low voice.

"Immediately, immediately,"—replied the latter hurriedly.—"Gentlemen," he added,—"I must ask you to excuse me. . . . Vásya here, my manager, has just informed me of a 'thingum-

bob' of such a nature" (Golúshkin expressed himself in this manner by way of a joke), "that I am imperatively obliged to absent myself for a time; but I hope, gentlemen, that you will consent to dine with me to-day at three o'clock; and then we shall be much more at liberty!"

Neither Solómin nor Nezhdánoff knew what reply to make; but Markéloff immediately said, with the same surliness of visage and voice as before:

"Of course we will; but what sort of a comedy is this?"

"I thank you sincerely,"—Golúshkin caught him up—and, bending toward Markéloff, he added:—"I 'll contribute a thousand rubles, at least, to the cause . . . have no doubt as to that!"

And thereupon he thrice made a gesture with his right hand, with the thumb and little finger outspread, signifying: "I 'll keep my word!"

He escorted his guests to the door,—and standing on the threshold he shouted:

"I shall expect you at three o'clock!"

"You may!"—replied Markéloff alone.

"Gentlemen!"—said Solómin as soon as all three found themselves in the street,—"I am going to hire a drozhky and drive to the factory. What shall we do until dinner-time?—idle about? And as for that merchant of ours . . . . it strikes me that we shall get neither wool nor milk out of him, any more than out of a goat."

"Well, there will be some wool,"—remarked Markéloff, gruffly. "Here he has promised money. Do you despise him? We cannot enter into details.—We are not fastidious girls of marriageable age."

"As if I despised him!" calmly responded Solómin. "I am only asking myself of what use my own presence can be? However," he added, glancing at Nezhdánoff with a smile:—"as you like; I will remain. Misery loves company."

Markéloff raised his head.

"Let us go, for the time being, to the public park; the weather is fine."

"Come on."

They set out.—Markéloff and Solómin in front, Nezhdánoff behind them.

XVIII

His soul was in a strange state. There had been so many new sensations, so many new faces during the last two days. . . . For the first time in his life he had become intimately acquainted with a young girl, with whom—in all probability—he had fallen in love. He had been present—in all probability—at the inception of the cause, to which he had consecrated all his powers. . . And what then? . . . Was he happy?—No.—Was he wavering? growing cowardly? disconcerted?—Oh, of course not. Then, was he experiencing, at least, that tension of the whole being, that impetuous longing to advance into the front ranks of the warriors which the imminent approach of a battle calls forth?—No, again. "Did he, then, after all, believe in that cause?—Oh, accursed æsthetic! Sceptic!" whispered his lips dumbly.—Why this languor, this disinclination even to speak as soon as he was not yelling and raging?—What inward voice was he endeavouring to stifle by that yell? But Marianna, that glorious, trusting comrade, that pure, passionate soul, that magnificent young girl—did not she love him? Was it not a great piece of luck that he should

have met her, that he should have won her friendship, her love? And those two beings, who were now walking in front of him, that Markéloff, that Solómin, whom he still knew so little, but toward whom he felt so greatly attracted,—were not they capital specimens of Russian existence, of Russian life,—and was not acquaintance, intimacy with them a piece of good luck also?—Then why that ill-defined, perturbed, aching sensation? Why that sadness?—"If thou art a reflective and melancholy man,"—whispered his lips again,—"why the devil art thou a revolutionist? Write verses, languish, and wrestle with thine own petty thoughts and sensations—and burrow into various psychological considerations and subtleties,—but, the chief thing of all is,—do not take thy sickly, nervous irritation and whims for the manly indignation, for the honourable wrath of the man of convictions!—Oh, Hamlet, Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, how am I to emerge from thy shadow? How am I to leave off imitating thee in everything, even in the disgraceful enjoyment of my own self-castigation?"

"Alexis! Friend! the Russian Hamlet!"—suddenly rang out a familiar, piping voice, as though in echo to all these reflections.—"Is it thee I behold?"

Nezhdánoff raised his eyes—and with amazement, saw before him Pákhlin!—Pákhlin in the image of a shepherd, clothed in a flesh-coloured

garment, with no neckcloth round his neck, in a large straw hat, encircled by a blue ribbon, and thrust clear back on the nape of his neck—and in lacquered shoes!

He immediately limped up to Nezhdánoff and grasped his hand.

"In the first place,"—he began,—"although we are in the public park, we must embrace . . . and kiss each other, according to our old habit. . . One! two! three!—In the second place, thou knowest that if I had not met thee to-day thou wouldst certainly have beheld my countenance to-morrow,—for thy place of residence is known to me, and I even came to this town with the express intention . . . in some manner or other,—but of that later; in the third place, introduce me to thy comrades. Tell me, briefly, who they are, and tell them who I am, and we will enjoy life!"

Nezhdánoff complied with his friend's desire, named him to Markéloff and Solómin—and told about each one of them—who he was, where he lived, what he did, and so forth.

"Very good indeed!"—exclaimed Pákhlin;—"and now, permit me to lead you all far from the crowd which does not, however, exist—to the isolated bench, seated whereon I, in hours of meditation, enjoy nature.—There is a wonderfully fine view from it: the Governor's house, two striped sentry-boxes, three gendarmes, and not a single dog!—But you must not be too greatly

surprised at my speeches, wherewith I so sedulously endeavour to make you laugh!—In the opinion of my friends, I am the representative of Russian wit . . . hence, probably, my limp."

Pákhlin led the friends to the "isolated bench," and seated them on it, first having driven away from it two beggar-women. The young men "exchanged ideas," . . . a decidedly tiresome occupation in the majority of cases—especially in the early stages of acquaintance—and remarkably sterile of results.

"Halt!"—suddenly exclaimed Pákhlin, turning to Nezhdánoff,—"I must explain to thee why I am here. Thou knowest I take my sister away somewhere every year; when I learned that thou wert setting out for the neighbourhood of this town, I called to mind that in this very town dwell two of the most remarkable persons: a man and wife who are relatives of ours . . . on the mother's side. My father was a burgher"—(Nezhdánoff knew that, but Pákhlin said it for the benefit *of those two*)—"and she was of noble birth. And they have been inviting us to make them a visit for this long time past!—Stay! I say to myself. . . That just suits me. They are the kindest sort of people, my sister will be advantageously situated with them; what more could be desired?—so we just came hither. And it was exactly the right thing! So we are well off here. . . I cannot tell you how well off!—But

what people they are! What people!—You certainly must make their acquaintance! What are you doing here? Where are you going to dine? And why, precisely, did you come here?"

"We are to dine to-day at the house of a certain Golúshkin. . There is a merchant here of that name," replied Nezhdánoff.

"At what o'clock?"

"At three."

"And you are to see him about . . . about . . . ." Pákhlin cast a scrutinising glance at Solómin, who smiled, and at Markéloff, whose brow grew more and more lowering.

"Come, Alyósha; tell them, . . . make some free-mason sign, I mean it . . . tell them that they need not stand on ceremony with me. . . . For I am one of you . . . of your society. . . ."

"Golúshkin is one of us also,"—remarked Nezhdánoff.

"Well, that 's splendid!—There 's lots of time yet before three o'clock.—See here—let 's go to my relations'."

"Why, you are out of your mind! How can one be so . . . ."

"Don't you worry about that! I assume the responsibility myself.—Imagine: it 's an oasis! Neither politics, nor literature, nor anything contemporary ever gets a peep in there. . The little house is a pot-bellied sort of affair, such as is nowhere to be seen nowadays anywhere; the

smell in it is—antique; the people are antiques; the air is antique . . . whatever you touch is antique. Katherine the Second, powder, farthingales, the eighteenth century!—The master and mistress of the house, ... just fancy: both man and wife are old, very old, of the same age,—and devoid of wrinkles; round, plump, clean, regular little love-bird parakeets; but good to stupidity, to holiness, without limit! I am told that 'unlimited' goodness is often accompanied by the absence of moral sentiment. . . But I do not enter into such subtleties, and I only know that my little old folks are good, kind souls! And they never had any children. They are called the 'blessed,'[1] in town. They both dress exactly alike, in a sort of long, hooded garment of striped stuff—and the stuff is of such solid quality, you cannot find any such anywhere nowadays.—They are frightfully like each other—only one of them wears a cap on her head and the other has a night-cap on his—with exactly the same sort of ruches as are on the cap, but without any ribbon. If it were not for the ribbon, you would not know them apart; and the husband is beardless, to boot. And their names are: one,—Fómushka, and the other Fímushka.—I tell you, one ought to pay money to have a look at them. They love each other to an impossible degree: and if any one calls on them, it is—'Pray come in!'—

[1] In the sense of half-witted.—TRANSLATOR.

And obliging people: they will show off all their little tricks at once. There is only one point: smoking is not allowed in their house: not because they are sectarians,[1]—but because tobacco disgusts them. . . . And in their day, who smoked? —On the other hand, they keep no canary-birds—because that bird was also not widely disseminated at that epoch. . . . And that is a great piece of good-luck—you will agree!—Well, how is it to be? Will you go?"

"Really, I do not know,"—began Nezhdánoff.

"Stay: I have not yet told you all.—Their voices are exactly alike: if you shut your eyes you do not know which one of them is talking. Only Fómushka's speech is somewhat the more tender of the two.—Here you are gentlemen, making preparations for the great cause,—perhaps for a terrible struggle. . . Why, before you hurl yourself into those raging waters . . . don't you take a dip into . . . ."

"Into stagnant water?"—interrupted Markéloff.

"Well, what of that?—It is stagnant, that 's a fact; only it is not putrid.—There are pools on the steppes of that sort; although they have no outlet they never become covered with scum because they have springs at the bottom.—And my

[1] The *raskólniki*—sectarians, who cling to the unrevised versions of the scriptures and church service-books (also called "Old Ritualists")—object to tobacco, tea, and coffee on religious grounds, which they justify by quaint arguments.—TRANSLATOR.

old folks have springs—there, at the bottom of their hearts, pure, exceedingly pure springs.—And there 's another thing: would you like to know how people lived a hundred, a hundred and fifty years ago?—then make haste and follow me. For the day, the hour, will come—it will, inevitably, be one and the same hour for both of them—and my love-birds will tumble off their perch—and everything antique will come to an end with them—and the pot-bellied little house will disappear—and in its place there will spring up what, according to the assertion of my grandmother, always does spring up on the spot where there have been 'humans,' namely, nettles, burdock, sowthistles, wormwood, and horse-dock; the street itself will cease to exist, and men will come, and nothing of that sort will ever be found again, unto ages of ages!" . . . .

"Well, why not?"—cried Nezhdánoff:—"really, we might as well go!"

"I am ready, with the greatest pleasure,"—said Solómin;—"that 's not in my line—but it is curious, all the same;—and if Mr. Pákhlin really can guarantee that we shall not discommode any one by our visit, then . . . why not. . . ."

"Come, you need have no doubts!"—exclaimed Pákhlin in his turn:—"they will go into raptures over you—and that 's all. What 's the use of standing on ceremony. I tell you, they are

blessed eccentrics, we will make them sing.—And you, Mr. Markéloff—do you accept?"

Markéloff wrathfully shrugged his shoulders.

"I cannot remain here alone!—Please show us the way."—The young men rose from the bench.

"What an awe-inspiring gentleman thou hast with thee,"—whispered Pákhlin to Nezhdánoff, pointing at Markéloff:—"Precisely like John the Forerunner, when he had eaten the locusts . . . the locusts alone, without any honey!—But that one,"—he added, nodding his head in the direction of Solómin,—"is a splendid fellow! What a glorious smile he has!—I have noticed that only those people who are above the rest smile in that way—and are not aware of it themselves."

"Are there any such people?" asked Nezhdánoff.

"They are rare; but they do exist,"—replied Pákhlin.

XIX

Fómushka and Fímushka—Fomá Lavréntievitch and Evfémia Pávlovna Subótcheff—both belonged to one and the same ancient Russian noble stock—and were regarded as almost the oldest residents of the town of S....—They had married very early in life—and a great many years ago had settled down in an ancestral wooden house on the outskirts of the town—had never left it—and never, in any respect whatever, had changed their mode of life or their habits. Time, apparently, had stood still, so far as they were concerned; no "novelty" ever made its way across the threshold of their "oasis." Their property was not large; but their peasants, as of yore, still continued to bring them domestic fowls and provisions several times a year; the village elder, at appointed dates, presented himself with the quit-rent money, and a pair of hazel-hens, which were supposed to have been shot at the forest villa of his master and mistress, which, in reality, had long ago disappeared; he was treated to tea on the threshold of the drawing-room, he was presented with a sheepskin cap, a pair of green chamois mittens, and dismissed in God's keeping. The Subótcheff's house was full

of house-serfs. The aged servant, Kalliópitch, clad in an under-jacket of unusually thick cloth, with a standing collar, and tiny steel buttons, announced, as of yore, in a drawl, " the food is on the table," and fell into a doze as he stood behind his mistress' chair. The pantry was in his charge:—he reigned over " divers dried fruits, cardamon-seeds, and lemons,"—and to the question: had he heard that liberty had been proclaimed for all the serfs?—he always replied that some people chattered lots of nonsense; there is liberty among the Turks,—but, thank God, it had skipped him. The maid Púfka, a dwarf, was kept for amusement, but the old nurse, Vasílievna, entered during dinner, with a huge, dark-coloured kerchief on her head—and narrated all sorts of news in a mumbling voice:—about Napoleon, the year '12, about Antichrist and white negroes;—or, with her chin propped on her hand, as though in affliction, she communicated to them what sort of a dream she had had, and what it signified, and what fortune the cards had shown her. The Subótcheff's house itself was distinguished from all the other houses in the town: it was built wholly of oak, and had windows in the form of equal-sided squares; the double sashes were never removed. And it contained all sorts of outer vestibules, old-fashioned rooms with old-fashioned names:—and hot chambers, and light chambers at the top of the house, and one-roomed, semi-

cottages in the back yard, and porches with balustrades, and pigeon-houses on carved pillars, and all sorts of rear entrances and tiny rooms. In front there was a small garden, and at the back a garden; and in the garden,—what coops, detached sheds, barns, cold-storehouses, ice-houses . . . a regular nest! Not that there was a great deal of property preserved in all these buildings —some of them had already fallen into decay;— but all that had been constructed in ancient times, —well, and so it had remained. The Subótcheffs had only two horses, aged, saddle-backed, shaggy animals; on one of them even, white spots had come out, owing to age; its name was Nedvíga, the Motionless. They were harnessed—at most once a month—to a remarkable equipage with which the whole town was familiar, presenting the semblance of the earthly globe with a quarter part cut out in front, and upholstered in the inside with a foreign material, yellow in hue, thickly strewn with large blisters in the shape of warts. The last yard of that material had been woven in Utrecht or Lyons in the days of the Empress Elizabeth! And the Subótcheffs' coachman, also, was a very aged old man permeated with the odour of train-oil and tar; his beard started close up to his eyes, and his eyebrows fell in small cascades on his beard. He was so deliberate in his movements that he took five whole minutes over a pinch of snuff, two minutes to tuck his

whip into his girdle, and more than two hours to harness Nedvíga alone. His name was Perfíshka. If the Subótcheff's happened to go out for a drive and the equipage was obliged to make the slightest ascent—they invariably got frightened—(but they were frightened, also, when they went down hill)—they clung to the carriage-straps, and both kept repeating aloud: "Horses! horses . . . have the strength of Samuel:—but we—but we are lighter than down, lighter than a spirit!!" . . . . Every one in the town of S. . . . regarded the Subótcheff's as eccentrics, almost in the light of crazy people:—and they themselves admitted that they were not adapted to the order of things at the present day . . . . but they did not grieve much over that:—in that manner of existence into which they had been born, in which they had grown up, and entered the married state—in that manner of life they remained. One peculiarity alone of that life had not adhered to them: they never since they were born had punished any one, or had called any one to account for anything. If one of their servants turned out to be a notorious drunkard or thief, they first exercised patience and bore with him for a long time, as other people endure bad weather; and at last they endeavoured to get rid of him, to let him go to another master and mistress: as much as to say,—let them worry over it for a while also! But this misfortune rarely occurred to them,—so rarely that it

constituted an epoch in their lives,—and they were wont to say, for example: " That happened long ago; it came to pass when that impudent Aldáshka lived with us "; or " when grandfather's fur cap with the fox-tail was stolen from us. . . . ." The Subótcheffs still used that sort of cap.—But another distinguishing characteristic of ancient customs was not to be observed in them: neither Fómushka nor Fímushka were over-religious people. Fómushka even held to Voltairian rules; and Fímushka was deathly afraid of ecclesiastical persons: they had the gift of the evil eye, according to her. " The priest will sit a while with me,"—she was wont to say,—" and, lo and behold! the cream has turned sour! "—They rarely went out to church—and they fasted in the Roman Catholic style, that is to say, they used eggs, butter, and milk. This was known in the town—and, of course, it did not redeem their reputation. But their goodness conquered everything; and although people made fun of the queer Subótcheffs, although they regarded them as idiots and blessed fools, nevertheless, in reality, they respected them.

Yes; they respected them . . . . but as for going to see them, no one did that. But neither did they feel aggrieved thereby. They were never bored when they were together—and therefore they never parted, and desired no other society. Neither Fómushka nor Fímushka had ever been

ill a single time; but if one or the other of them felt slightly indisposed—then *both* of them drank an infusion of linden flowers, rubbed their loins with warm oil—or dropped hot tallow on the soles of their feet—and in a short time everything passed off.—They always spent their days in the same way. They rose late, took chocolate in the morning out of small cups, in the shape of mortars; " tea,"—they asserted,—" came into fashion after our day ";—they sat facing each other, and either chatted—(and they always found something to talk about!)—or read from " An Agreeable Way to Pass the Time," " The Mirror of Light," or " The Aonid "; or they looked through an old album, bound in red morocco with a gilded edge, which had once been the property, so the inscription ran, of one Mme. Barbe de Kabýline. —When and how that album had fallen into their hands—they themselves did not know. It contained several French and many Russian poems and articles in prose, in the nature, for example, of the following " brief " reflections concerning " Cecero."

In what frame of mind Cecero entered upon the rank of quæstor, the following will set forth. Having called on the gods to bear witness to the purity of his sentiments in all the offices wherewith he had hitherto been honoured, he considered himself bound by the most sacred bonds to a worthy fulfilment of them, and in that intention he, Cecero, not only had not addicted

himself to any pleasures,—but had even shunned such enjoyments as appear to be utterly indispensable.

—Below this stood:

Written in Siberia, in hunger and cold.

There was also a good poem, entitled "Thyrsos," wherein such strophes as the following occurred:

Repose the universe directs,
The dew with pleasure glistens,
Caresses nature and refreshes,
Imparts to her new life!

Thyrsos alone, with sorrowing soul
Suffers, torments himself, and grieves. . . .
When with him dear Aneta is not—
Nothing can him cheer!

—and an impromptu by a passing captain, in the year 1790, "The Sixth Day of May":

Ne'er shall I forget!
Thee, village beloved!
And I shall ever bear in mind!
How pleasantly the time did pass!
The honour that I had!

With thine owner fair!
The five best days of life!
To spend in the most respected circle!
Amid a multitude of ladies and young girls,
And other *an*teresting persons!

On the last page of the album stood—instead of verses—recipes for maladies of the stomach, for spasms—and, alas!—even for tape-worms. The Subótcheffs dined punctually at twelve o'clock, and always ate old-fashioned viands: curd-fritters, sour soup with salted gherkins, freely-salted cabbage, patties filled with salted cucumbers, hasty-pudding, rolls made with eggs, pudding of potato flour flavoured with fruit juice, compotes of dried fruits and berries, sweetened with raisins or honey, fowl roasted on a spit with saffron, custard with honey. After dinner they reposed,—a brief hour, no more,—waked up, again sat down facing each other, and drank bilberry ale, and sometimes even an effervescent sort, called "forty minds," which, however, almost every time spurted out of the bottle and caused great laughter to the old couple, but much vexation to Kallió-pitch; he had to wipe up "everywhere"—and he grumbled for a long time, at the housekeeper and the cook, who had invented that beverage, according to his assertions. . . . "And what satisfaction is there in it? It only spoils the *purniture!*" —Then the Subótcheffs read something again, or joked with the dwarf Púfka, or sang together antiquated romances (their voices were exactly alike, high-pitched, weak, rather quavering, and hoarse—especially after a nap—but not devoid of agreeability)—or, in conclusion, they played cards, but always old-fashioned games: *krebs, la*

mouche, or even *boston samprander!* Then the samovár made its appearance; in the evening they drank tea. . . . They made *this* concession to the spirit of the age; but every time they regarded it as self-indulgence, and thought that the nation was growing distinctly less robust "from that Chinese weed."—In general, however, they refrained from censuring the new epoch, and from lauding the old one: they had never lived otherwise in their lives, but that other people might live in a different—and even a better manner—they were willing to concede, if only they were not compelled to make any changes!—At eight o'clock Kalliópitch served supper, consisting of the inevitable cold hash with kvas, and at nine o'clock the striped, high-swelling feather-beds received into their mellow embrace the plump bodies of Fómushka and Fímushka, and untroubled sleep descended without delay upon their eyelids.—And everything grew silent in the ancient house: the shrine-lamp twinkled in front of the holy pictures, and an odour of musk and balm was spread abroad, a cricket whirred—and the good, ridiculous, innocent couple slept on.

It was to these simpletons, or, as he expressed it, to these love-birds, who were entertaining his sister, that Pákhlin conducted his acquaintances. His sister was a clever girl, not devoid of comeliness. She had wonderful eyes; but her unfortunate hump crushed her, deprived her of all confi-

dence in herself and cheerfulness, rendered her distrustful, and almost malicious. And it was her luck to have a very curious name: Snandúliya! —Pákhlin had wanted to change it to Sóphya; but she clung obstinately to her strange name, saying that a hunchback ought to be called precisely that—Snandúliya. She was a good musician, and played very respectably on the piano— "thanks to my long fingers,"—she was accustomed to remark, not without bitterness: "hunchbacked people always have that sort of fingers."

The visitors found Fómushka and Fímushka at the very moment when they had waked up from their post-prandial nap, and were sipping their fruit ale.

"We are entering the eighteenth century!"— exclaimed Pákhlin, as soon as they crossed the threshold of the Subótcheffs' house.

And, in truth, the eighteenth century greeted the visitors in the very anteroom, in the shape of low, bluish screens with black silhouettes of powdered dames and cavaliers, which had been cut out and pasted on them. At one fortunate period, in the '80s of the eighteenth century, the popular silhouettes of Lavater were in high fashion in Russia. The sudden appearance of such a large number of visitors—four altogether!—produced a sensation in the rarely-visited house. The trampling of booted and bare feet became audible, several feminine faces were thrust out for a

moment, and then vanished—some one was thrust in somewhere, some one groaned, some one snorted, some one whispered convulsively: "The devil take you!"

At last Kalliópitch made his appearance in his rough under-jacket—and throwing open the door into the "hall," announced in a loud voice:

"Sir, here comes Síla Samsónitch with some other gentlemen!"

The host and hostess were far less perturbed than their domestics. The irruption of four adult men into their fairly spacious drawing-room did, in sooth, somewhat amaze them;—but Pákhlin immediately reassured them, by introducing to them, in turn, with divers quaint comments,—Nezhdánoff, Solómin, and Markéloff—as peaceable, and not "crown" persons.

Fómushka and Fímushka were not especially fond of crown—that is to say, of official persons.

Snandúliya, who presented herself in response to her brother's summons, was much more agitated, and stood on a good deal more ceremony than the old Subótcheffs. Both simultaneously—and with precisely the same expressions—invited the visitors to be seated, and inquired what refreshments should be served to them: tea, chocolate, or sparkling fruit ale with preserves? When they had ascertained that their guests wished for nothing, as they had recently breakfasted with merchant Golúshkin, they ceased to press re-

freshments upon them, and clasping their hands on their laps in precisely similar manner, they entered into conversation.

At first this dragged on rather languidly, but soon became animated.—Pákhlin made the old folks laugh excessively by Gógol's familiar anecdotes about the chief of police who forced his way into the church, which was crammed full, and about the police-chief looking like a patty; they laughed until they cried. They laughed also in identical fashion: very shrilly, winding up with a cough, and with faces flushed and perspiring all over. Pákhlin had noticed, in general, that quotations from Gógol act very powerfully and rather violently on persons like the Subótcheffs; but, as he was not anxious to amuse them, as he was to exhibit them to his friends, he changed his battery, and the old couple were soon completely reassured. Fómushka brought out and exhibited to the visitors his favourite snuff-box of carved wood, on which, formerly, thirty-six human figures could have been counted, in various attitudes: they had all, long since, been erased—but Fómushka saw them, saw them down to that very moment, and was able to enumerate them, and pointed them out.—"Look"—he said, "here is one looking out of a little window—see, he has thrust out his head. . . . ." But the spot at which his pudgy finger, with its raised nail pointed, was as smooth as the rest of the lid of

the snuff-box. Then he called the attention of his visitors to the picture which hung over his head, painted in oils: it depicted a huntsman in profile, galloping at full speed on a light-bay horse—also in profile—across a snow-covered plain. The huntsman wore a tall sheepskin cap with a sky-blue top, a kazák kaftan of camel's hair, with a velvet border, girt with a forged, gilt belt; a silk-embroidered mitten was thrust into the belt; his dagger, in a silver scabbard with black niello work hung from it. In one hand, in a very dashing and masterful manner, the huntsman held a huge horn, adorned with red tassels, and in the other, his reins and kazák whip; all four feet of the horse were hanging in the air;—and on each one of them the painter had carefully depicted a shoe, even designating the nails. "And observe," said Fómushka, pointing with the same pudgy finger at the four semicircular spots brought out on the white background behind the horse's hoofs—"his tracks in the snow—and he has even represented them!"—Why there were only four of those tracks—and why not a single one was visible any further behind him—Fómushka did not explain.

"And, you know,—that was I!" he added, after a brief pause, with a shamefaced smile.

"What?"—exclaimed Nezhdánoff.—"Were you the huntsman?"

"Yes . . . . but not for long. Once, when riding at full speed, I flew over the horse's head,

and wounded my *kurpei.* Well, and Fímushka got frightened . . and forbade me. I abandoned it from that time on."

"What was it that you wounded?"—inquired Nezhdánoff.

"My *kurpei,*"—repeated Fómushka, dropping his voice.

The guests exchanged mute glances. No one knew what a *kurpei* was,—that is to say, Markéloff knew that the shaggy tuft on the cap of a Kazák or a Tcherkessian was called a *kurpei;* but assuredly, Fómushka could not have wounded *that!* But not one of them could make up his mind to ask him, what, precisely, he meant by the word *kurpei.*

"Well, since thou hast made thy boast," began Fímushka, suddenly,—"I 'm going to make my boast, too!"

From a tiny "*bonheur du jour*"—that was the appellation of an ancient bureau, on tiny, crooked legs, with a movable circular lid which ran into the back of the bureau,—she drew forth a miniature in water-colours, in an oval, bronze frame, representing a perfectly naked child of four years, with a quiver on its back, and a sky-blue ribbon across its breast, testing its sharp arrows with the tip of its finger. The child had very curly hair, was slightly cross-eyed, and was smiling. Fímushka showed the water-colour to her visitors.

"That was I . . . ." she said.

"You?"

"Yes, I. In my youth. A French artist, a capital painter, was in the habit of visiting at the house of my deceased father. So he painted me as a gift on my father's Name-day. And what a nice Frenchman he was! He used to call on us after that, also.—He used to come in and give a scrape with his foot, and then wriggle it, and wriggle it, and kiss your hand, and when he went away, he would kiss his own fingers,—indeed he would!—And he bowed right and left and behind and in front! He was a very nice Frenchman!"

The visitors praised his work; Pákhlin even thought that there still existed some degree of resemblance.

But at this point Fómushka began to talk about the French of the present day, and enunciated the opinion that they must have all become very malicious!—"Why so, Fomá Lavréntievitch?"—"Why, good gracious! . . . What names they have taken to using!"—"For example?"—"Why, here, for example: Nojean-Saint-Lorrain!—a regular bandit!"—In this connection, Fómushka inquired who was now reigning in Paris?—They told him that it was Napoleon.—This apparently amazed him and grieved him.—"You don't say so? . . . Such an old man . . . ." he began, and relapsed into silence, glancing about him in confusion. Fómushka knew very

little French, and read Voltaire in translation (under the head of his bed, in a private coffer, he kept a manuscript copy of "Candide")—but he occasionally burst out into expressions such as: "that, my good sir, is a *fausse parquet!*"—(in the sense of "that is suspicious," "not true")—at which many people laughed, until one learned Frenchman explained that that was the ancient parliamentary expression used in his native land prior to the year 1780.

As the conversation had turned on France and the French, Fímushka brought herself to inquire about a certain matter which had been lingering in her mind.—At first she thought of applying to Markéloff, but he looked too sullen; she might have asked Solómin—but no!—she said to herself,—he is a common person; he is not likely to know French. So she addressed herself to Nezhdánoff.

"Well, my dear little father, I want to find out something from you,"—she began;—"you must excuse me! For my young relative here, Síla Samsónitch, to wit, makes fun of me, an old woman, and at my feminine ignorance."

"What is it?"

"It is this. If any one wanted to put such a question as this, in the French dialect: 'What is that?'—ought he to say: 'Kese-kese-kese-lya?'"

"Exactly that."

"But could he also say: 'kese-kese-lya?'"

"Yes."

"And simply: 'kese-lya?'"

"He might do that, also."

"And all would amount to the same thing?"

"Yes."

Fímushka reflected, and threw apart her hands.

"Now, Sílushka,"—she said at last,—"I am in the wrong, and thou art in the right. Only, those French people! . . . . Poor things!"

Pákhlin began to entreat the old people to sing some little romance. . . . They both laughed, and were surprised that the idea should have occurred to him; but they speedily assented, but only on condition that Snandúliya should sit down at the harpsichord and accompany them—she knew in what. In one corner there turned out to be a tiny piano which none of the visitors had noticed at first. Snandúliya seated herself at this "harpsichord," struck a few chords. . . . Such toothless, shrill, wizened, decrepit sounds Nezhdánoff had never heard since he was born; but the old couple immediately struck up:

"And was it then—that sadness—"

began Fómushka—

"In love should descend on us,
That the gods have given us hearts

Which are capable of love? [1]
Doth the feeling of passion only—"

responded Fímushka—

"Without calamity, without malign misfortune
Exist anywhere on earth?"

"Nowhere, nowhere, nowhere!"—

interpolated Fómushka;

"Nowhere, nowhere, nowhere!"—

repeated Fímushka;

"With it there is cruel sorrow
Everywhere, everywhere, everywhere!"—

they sang in unison:

"Everywhere, everywhere, everywhere!"—

Fómushka ended, in long-drawn tones.

"Bravo!" shouted Pákhlin:—"that 's the first couplet; and how about the second?"

"Very well,"—replied Fómushka:—"only, Snandúliya Samsónovna, where is the trill? There ought to be a trill after my verse."

"Very well,"—replied Snandúliya;—"you shall have your trill."

Fómushka began again:

"Has any one loved in the universe
Yet torment has not felt?

[1] The alternate lines rhyme in the original.—Translator.

What lover, oh, what lover
Hath not wept and sighed?"

And then Fímushka:

"So the heart is as strange on the heights,
As the boat that sinks in the sea. . .
Why was it given to us?"

"For harm, for harm, for harm!"

exclaimed Fómushka—and waited, to give Snandúliya time to make the trill.

Snandúliya made it.

"For harm, for harm, for harm!"

repeated Fómushka.

And then both together:

"Take back the heart, ye gods,
Take back, take back, take back!
Take back, take back, take back!"

And everything again wound up with a trill.

"Bravo! bravo!"—they all cried, with the exception of Markéloff, and then even clapped their hands.

"Now I wonder,"—thought Nezhdánoff, as soon as the applause had ceased,—"whether they are conscious that they are acting the part . . . of clowns, as it were?—Perhaps not:—and perhaps they are conscious of it, but think: 'Where 's the harm since we are doing no one any mischief? We are even amusing others.' And, when you

come to think it over thoroughly, they are in the right, a hundred times in the right!"

Under the influence of these thoughts, he suddenly began to pay them compliments, in response to which they merely made slight courtesies, without quitting their arm-chairs. . . But, at that moment, from the adjoining room, probably a bed-chamber or the maids' room, whence whispering and rustling had long been audible, the dwarf Púfka suddenly made her appearance, accompanied by nurse Vasílievna.—Púfka began to squeak and writhe—and the nurse dissuaded her, and urged her on worse than before, by turns.

Markéloff, who had, for a long time, been exhibiting signs of impatience—(Solómin merely smiled more broadly than usual)—Markéloff turned to Fómushka, all at once:

"I had not expected it of you,"—he began, with his harsh manner,—"that you, with your enlightened mind,—for you are, I hear a disciple of Voltaire,—can amuse yourself with that which ought to constitute an object of commiseration—namely, with a deformed person. . . . ." Here he remembered Pákhlin's sister, and bit his tongue;—and Fómushka turned scarlet: "Yes . . . . but you see . . . it is n't I . . . she likes it herself. . ." But Púfka fairly pounced upon Markéloff.

"And what made thee take it into thy head,"

—she burst out in her whirring voice,—"to insult my master and mistress? They have taken care of me, a wretched pauper, they have received me into their house, they give me food and drink —and thou enviest me! So it makes thee cross-eyed, does it, to look at other folks' bread?—And where didst thou get the idea, thou black-visaged, horrid, repulsive creature, with moustache like a black beetle's. . . ." Here Púfka demonstrated with her thick, short fingers what sort of moustache he had.—Vasílievna grinned to the full extent of her toothless mouth—and an echo was audible from the adjoining room.

"I do not presume to judge you, of course," —said Markéloff to Fómushka.—"To care for the poverty-stricken and the crippled is a good work. But permit me to remark to you: to live in abundance, to live in clover—not to oppress others, but yet not to lay finger to finger for the welfare of one's neighbour . . . does not constitute being good; I, at least, to tell the truth, attach no value whatever to that sort of goodness!"

Here Púfka uttered a deafening shriek; she had not understood a word of what Markéloff had been saying; but the "black-face" was scolding . . . how dared he?—Vasílievna also muttered something—and Fómushka clasped his hands on his breast—and turning his face to his wife—"Fímushka, my darling,"—he said, al-

most sobbing—" dost thou hear what our gentleman guest is saying? Thou and I are sinners, evil-doers, pharisees . . . . we are living in clover, oï! oï! oï! . . . Thou and I must be turned into the street, out of our house—and have a broom apiece put into our hands, in order that we may earn our own living—oh, ho-ho!" On hearing these melancholy words, Púfka took to shrieking worse than before, Fímushka narrowed her eyes, curled her lips—and, after inhaling plenty of air, in order that she might produce a good effect—she began to scream and cry at the top of her voice. . . .

God knows how all this would have ended, had not Pákhlin interfered.

" What 's the meaning of this! upon my word," —he began, flourishing his hands and laughing loudly,—" are n't you ashamed of yourselves?—Mr. Markéloff was trying to joke;—but he has a very serious mien—and he was a trifle severe . . and you took it in earnest!—Enough of this! Evfémia Pávlovna, my dear creature, we are obliged to go away directly—so do you know what I am going to propose? by way of farewell . . . tell the fortunes of all of us . . . you are a master-hand at that.—Sister! Fetch the cards!"

Fímushka glanced at her husband; the latter was already sitting there quite serenely;—and she calmed down.

"The cards, the cards,"—she repeated:—"but I have unlearned it, father; I have forgotten—it 's a long time since I took them in my hands. . . . ."

But she did take into her hands, from the hands of Snandúliya, a pack of ancient, extraordinary, ombre cards.

"Whose fortune shall I tell?"

"Why, all our fortunes,"—said Pákhlin, promptly—but thought to himself:—"Well, what a volatile old lady it is! turn her any way you like. . . She 's charming!—All our fortunes, grandma, all,"—he added, "the future, tell us everything!"

Fímushka was on the point of laying out the cards, when she suddenly flung the whole pack from her.

"I do not need to tell your fortunes by the cards!"—she cried; "I know the characters of each one of you without that.—And according as the character is, so is the fate.—Now, that one" (she pointed at Solómin)—"is a cool, steadfast man;—and that one,"—(she shook her finger at Markéloff)—"is a hot-headed, destructive man." . . . (Púfka stuck her tongue out at him);—"there 's no need of saying anything to thee,"—(she glanced at Pákhlin); "thou knowest thyself: weathercock! And that one . . . ."

She pointed at Nezhdánoff—and faltered.

"Well?"—said he—"speak out, pray: what sort of a man am I?"

"What sort of a man art thou . . . " drawled Fímushka:—"thou art a man who deserves to be pitied—that 's what thou art!"

Nezhdánoff started.

"Who deserves to be pitied! Why so?"

"Because! I pity thee—so I do!"

"But why?"

"Because I have an eye that sees things.—Dost thou think I am a fool? On the contrary, I 'm more clever than thou,—in spite of the fact that thou hast red hair.—I pity thee . . . and that 's my word to thee!"

All remained silent . . . . exchanged glances and continued to maintain silence.

"Well, good-bye, friends,"—cried Pákhlin, noisily.—"We have overstayed our time with you, and you must be tired of us.—It is time for these gentlemen to be going . . . and I 'm going off also.—Farewell; thanks for your courtesy!"

"Good-bye, good-bye; come again; do not disdain us,"—said Fómushka and Fímushka with one voice. . . And Fómushka suddenly struck up:

"Many, many, many years, many . . . . ."[1]

"Many, many,"—quite unexpectedly rumbled out Kalliópitch in his bass voice, as he opened the door for the young men. . . . .

[1] That is, "long life," chanted after toasts and the like.—TRANSLATOR.

And all four suddenly found themselves in the street in front of the pot-bellied house;—and inside the windows resounded Púfka's shrill voice.

"The fools . . . ." she shrieked, "the fools!"

Pákhlin laughed loudly; but no one responded to him. Markéloff even eyed each of them over in turn, as though expecting to hear some word of indignation. . .

Solómin alone was smiling, as was his wont.

XX

"Well, what do you think of it!"—Pákhlin was the first to speak.—"We have been in the eighteenth century,—now we must go ahead—straight into the twentieth!—Golúshkin is such a progressive man, that it is improper to reckon him in the nineteenth century."

"Why, dost thou know him?"—asked Nezhdánoff.

"His fame fills the earth:—but I said, 'we must go ahead!' because I intend to go with you."

"What is the meaning of this? Why, thou art not acquainted with him?"

"As if that mattered! And were you acquainted with my love-birds?"

"But thou didst introduce us!"

"And do you introduce me!—You cannot have any secrets from me—and Golúshkin is a broad man.—He 'll be delighted at a new face, see if he is n't.—And here, with us in S. . . . things are simple."

"Yes,"—muttered Markéloff,—"people are unceremonious here, with you."

Pákhlin shook his head.

"Perhaps you intend that for me. . . . Never

mind! I have deserved that reproof.—But, do you know, my new acquaintance, you 'd better lay aside for awhile the gloomy thoughts with which your bilious temperament inspires you! —and the chief thing . . . . ."

"Mr. My New Acquaintance,"—Markéloff interrupted him, vehemently,—" I will say to you, in my turn . . . by way of warning: I never have had the slightest inclination for jokes—and particularly to-day!—And what do you know about my temper*ament!*" (He emphasised the last syllable.)—" It strikes me that it is not so very long since we set eyes on each other for the first time."

" Come, stop, stop, don't get angry—and don't swear—I believe you without that,"—said Pákhlin—and, turning to Solómin:—" Oh, you,"—he exclaimed,—" you, whom even the perspicacious Fímushka called a cool man,—and in whom there certainly is something soothing—tell me, had I any intention of causing unpleasantness to any one—or of jesting at an inappropriate time?—I merely asked to be allowed to go with you to Golúshkin's—moreover, I am an inoffensive creature.—I am not to blame for Mr. Markéloff's yellow complexion."

Solómin first shrugged one shoulder, then the other; it was a trick he had when he could not immediately decide what answer to make.

" No doubt,"—he said, at last,—" you, Mr.

Pákhlin, cannot cause offence to any one—and you do not desire to do so: and why should not you go to Mr. Golúshkin's? I suppose that we shall pass the time as agreeably there as we did with your relatives;—and with the same profit."

Pákhlin shook his finger at him.

"Oh! but you are spiteful, I perceive!—But, of course, you are going to Golúshkin's also?"

"Of course I am. Otherwise, I should have wasted to-day."

"Well, then—'*en avant, marchons!*'—to the twentieth century! to the twentieth century!—Nezhdánoff, progressive man, lead the way!"

"Very well;—go ahead;—but don't repeat your witticisms. Some one might suspect that you were running short of them."

"I've got enough in stock for the likes of you," merrily retorted Pákhlin, and set out, as he said—not hop, skip, and jump, but "hop, skip, and limp."

"A very entertaining gentleman!"—remarked Solómin, as he followed him, arm in arm with Nezhdánoff:—"if we all get exiled to Siberia, there will be some one to amuse us."

Markéloff walked on in silence behind them all. And in the meantime all measures were being taken in the house of merchant Golúshkin, to serve dinner "in fine style," or "with chic." Fish-soup was cooked, very greasy—and very bad; various "patishó and frykasyei" were

prepared—(Golúshkin, in his quality of a man who stood at the apex of European civilisation, although he was an Old Ritualist, maintained a French kitchen, and hired a man cook from the Club whence he had been expelled for uncleanliness)—and, most important of all, several bottles of champagne were provided and put on the ice.

The host greeted our young men with the clumsy grimaces peculiar to him, a hurried aspect, and giggles.—He was very much pleased to see Pákhlin, as the latter had predicted that he would be. He asked him: "Are you really one of us?"—and, without waiting for an answer, exclaimed:—"Well, of course! I should think so!" Then he narrated how he had just been to see "that queer fellow," the Governor, who was forever bothering him about some philanthropic institutions—the devil only knows what. . . And positively, it was impossible to decide what gratified Golúshkin most: that he was received by the Governor, or that he had contrived to revile him, in the presence of young, progressive men. Then he introduced to them the promised proselyte. And whom did this proselyte turn out to be? That same smoothly-licked, consumptive man, with a jug-like phiz, who had entered that morning with a report, and whom Golúshkin had called Vásya,—his manager.—"He 's not eloquent,"—Golúshkin assured them, pointing

at him with all five fingers,—" but he is devoted to our cause with all his soul."—And Vásya merely bowed, and blushed, and blinked, and displayed his teeth in a grin, with such an air, that once again it was impossible to understand what sort of a fellow he was: a common-place little fool—or, on the contrary—the most perfect rogue and rascal?

" Well, but to table, gentlemen, to table,"—babbled Golúshkin.—They seated themselves at the table, having first eaten heartily of the relishes. Immediately after the soup, Golúshkin ordered the champagne to be served. Like frozen scraps of the first thin ice of winter, it trickled out of the necks of the bottles into the glasses held up to receive it.—" To our . . . to our enterprise!" exclaimed Golúshkin, winking one eye the while, and nodding his head toward the servant, thereby letting it be understood that they must be cautious in the presence of outsiders. The proselyte Vásya continued to remain mute—and, although he sat on the edge of his chair, and, in general, behaved with an obsequiousness which was not at all in keeping with the convictions to which he, according to his master's statements, was devoted with all his soul—yet he guzzled the wine desperately! . . . On the other hand, all the others talked; that is to say, in reality, the host talked—and so did Pákhlin—especially Pákhlin. Nezhdánoff

was inwardly vexed; Markéloff was in a rage and fury—in a different way, but no less violently, than at the Subótcheff's; Solómin took observations.

Pákhlin enjoyed himself!—With his audacious language he pleased Golúshkin extraordinarily, for the latter had no suspicion that that same "limpy" kept whispering in the ear of Nezhdánoff, who sat next to him, the most spiteful remarks about him, Golúshkin!—He even assumed that the former was a simple sort of young fellow, and that he might be "handled" patronisingly . . . and that was one reason—among others—why he liked him. Had Pákhlin been sitting beside him, he would long since have poked him in the ribs with his finger or slapped him on the shoulder; he kept nodding at him across the table, and wagging his head in his direction . . . but between Nezhdánoff and him there sat, in the first place Markéloff—that "gloomy cloud"—and then Solómin.—To make up for this, Golúshkin, at every word Pákhlin uttered, laughed gaily on faith, in advance, tapping himself on the belly, displaying his bluish gums. Pákhlin speedily comprehended what was required of him, and began to revile everything—(which exactly suited him)—everything and everybody: both the conservatives and the liberals, the officials and the lawyers, the administrators and the landed proprietors, and the mem-

bers of the county council, and of the town council, and Moscow and Petersburg!

"Yes, yes, yes, yes,"—chimed in Golúshkin; —"just so, just so, just so, just so!—Here, for instance, is our Mayor—a perfect ass! He 's an impenetrable blockhead!—I tell him thus and so . . . . but he understands nothing; he 's as bad as our Governor himself!"

"And is your Governor stupid?"—inquired Pákhlin.

"Why, I tell you he 's an ass!"

"Have you noticed whether he speaks with a rattle or with a snuffle?"

"What?"—inquired Golúshkin, not without surprise.

"But is it possible that you do not know? With us, in Russia, important civilians rattle in their throats; important military men talk through their noses with a snuffle;—and only the very loftiest dignitaries both rattle and snuffle, simultaneously."

Golúshkin roared, he even wept with laughter.

"Yes, yes,"—he lisped:—"he talks with a snuffle . . . through his nose with a snuffle. . . . He 's a military man!"

"Akh, you dolt!"—said Pákhlin to himself.

"With us everything is rotten, touch where you will!"—shouted Golúshkin, a little later.—"Everything, everything is rotten!"

"Most respected Kapíton Andréitch,"—re-

marked Pákhlin, impressively—and quietly said to Nezhdánoff: "Why does he keep jerking his arms out as though his coat cut him under the arms?"—"Most respected Kapíton Andréitch, believe me, half measures will do no good here!"

"What half measures?"—shouted Golúshkin, suddenly ceasing to laugh, and assuming a serious mien:—"there 's only one thing to be done; pluck them up by the roots!—Váska, drink, you cursed dog!"

"But I am drinking, Kapíton Andréitch,"—replied the clerk, emptying a glass down his throat.

Golúshkin also "filled himself to the brim."

"Why in the world does n't he burst!"—whispered Pákhlin to Nezhdánoff.

"Habit!"—replied the latter.

But the clerk was not the only one who drank the wine. Little by little it began to take effect on all of them.—Nezhdánoff, Markéloff, even Solómin gradually began to take part in the conversation.

At first, as though with scorn, as though with vexation at himself that he was not upholding his character and was allowing himself to beat the air vainly, Nezhdánoff began to enlarge upon the fact that it was time to stop amusing themselves with mere words, time to "act";—he even referred to "a secure foundation!" And at this point, not observing that he was contradicting

himself, he began to demand that they should point out to him those existing, real elements on which it was possible to rely, since he could not perceive them.—"In society there is no sympathy, in the populace there is no consciousness, ... struggle as you will!" Of course, no one made him any answer; not because there was no answer to make—but each one of them had already begun to utter his own ideas also.—Markéloff began to drum away, in a dull and spiteful voice, persistently, monotonously—("for all the world as though he were chopping up cabbage,"—remarked Pákhlin). Precisely what he was talking about was not quite intelligible; the word "artillery" became audible from his lips, at moments when a lull occurred . . . . in all probability he was alluding to the defects which he had discovered in its organisation. The Germans and adjutants caught it heavily also. Even Solómin remarked that there are two ways of waiting; to wait and do nothing, and to wait and advance the cause.

"We don't want any advocates of gradual change," remarked Markéloff, morosely.

"The advocates of gradual changes have, so far, come from above,"—remarked Solómin,—"but we are going to make an effort from below."

"We don't want them, to the devil with them! we don't want them,"—chimed in Golúshkin,

fiercely;—" it must be done at one onset, at one onset!"

" That is to say, you want to jump out of the window?"

" And jump I will!"—roared Golúshkin.—" I 'll jump!—and Váska will jump!—If I give the command, he 'll jump! Hey? Váska? —Thou wilt jump, wilt thou not?"

The clerk drained his glass of champagne.

" Whithersoever you go, Kapíton Andréitch, there I go also.—Dare I judge?"

" Ah! that 's right!—I 'll twist thee into a r-ram's h-horn!"

There speedily ensued what is known in the language of drunkards as the tower of Babel. There arose a " vast " noise and uproar.—As the first snow-flakes flutter, swiftly succeeding one another, and shimmer in the warm autumn air, —so, in the heated atmosphere of Golúshkin's dining-room did all sorts of words whirl about, conflicting with and crowding one another: progress, government, literature; the tax problem, classicism, realism, nihilism, communism; international, clerical, liberal, capital; administration, organisation, association, and even crystallisation! Apparently it was precisely this uproar which sent Golúshkin into ecstasies; therein, apparently, so far as he was concerned, lay the real essence of the thing. . . . He was triumphant! —" Know our people!" he seemed to say.

"Stand aside . . . or I'll kill you! . . . Kapíton Andréitch is coming!"—The clerk, Vásya, got so tipsy at last that he began to snort and to talk at his plate, and suddenly he shouted out like a madman:—"What the devil are progymnasia? !"

Golúshkin suddenly rose to his feet,—and throwing back his crimsoned face, whereon, with the expression of coarse despotism and triumph there was strangely intermingled the expression of a different sentiment, resembling secret alarm, and even trepidation,—he bawled: "I contribute another *t'ousand!*—Váska, fetch it here!" to which Váska replied, in an undertone:—"Splendid!" And Pákhlin, all pale and perspiring (for the last quarter of an hour he had been vieing with the clerk in his potations),—Pákhlin, jumping up from his seat, said with a faltering tongue:—"I contribute! He uttered: 'I contribute!'—Oh! insult to that sacred word—I sacrifice![1] No one dares to raise himself to thee, no one has the power to fulfil those obligations which thou imposest, at least no one of us here present,—and that self-fool, that vile sack has shaken his bloated belly, has strewn out a handful of rubles, and shouts: 'I sacrifice!' And he demands gratitude! he expects a crown of laurel—the villain!" Golúshkin either did not hear or

[1] To contribute and to sacrifice are indentical in Russian.—TRANSLATOR.

did not understand what Pákhlin had said, or, possibly, he accepted his words in the light of a jest, for he once more roared: "Yes! a *t'ousand* rubles! What Kapíton Golúshkin has said is sacred!" He suddenly thrust his hand into his side pocket.—"Here—here is the money!—There now, pick it up; and remember Kapíton!"—As soon as he got a little excited, he spoke of himself, as small children do, in the third person. Nezhdánoff gathered up the bank-bills which were scattered over the dripping table-cloth. But after that there was no reason for remaining; and it was getting late. All rose, took their hats,—and departed.

When they got into the open air the heads of all began to swim—especially Pákhlin's.

"Well?—where are we going now?"—he ejaculated not without difficulty.

"I don't know where you are going,"—replied Solómin,—"but I am going home."

"To the factory?"

"Yes."

"Now—by night—afoot?"

"What of that?—There are neither wolves nor brigands here, and I am a good walker.—It is cooler by night, too."

"But it is four versts thither!"

"I don't care if it were five.—Farewell for the present, gentlemen!"

Solómin buttoned up his coat, pulled his cap

down on his forehead, lighted a cigar, and went off down the street with great strides.

"And whither art thou going?"—Pákhlin appealed to Nezhdánoff.

"I 'm going home with him."—He pointed to Markéloff, who was standing motionless, with his arms folded on his breast.—"We have our horses here, and our carriage."

"Well, very good . . . and I, brother, am going to the oasis, to Fómushka and Fímushka. And here I will tell thee something, brother.—There is nonsense there and nonsense here. . . . Only, that nonsense,—the nonsense of the eighteenth century,—is nearer to Russian real life than this twentieth-century stuff.—Good-bye, gentlemen; I am drunk . . . don't be hard on me.—Hearken to what I am about to say to you! There is n't a woman in the world . . . kinder . . . and better . . . than my sister . . . Snandúliya; but then, she 's a hunchback, and she—she 's Snandúliya. And that 's the way it always is in this world!—However, it is fitting that she should have that name.—Do you know who Saint Snandúliya was? A benevolent woman who went about to the prisons, and healed the wounds of the prisoners and the sick.—But, good-bye! Good-bye, Nezhdánoff . . . thou man worthy of pity! And thou, officer . . . phew! thou phantom of an officer! good-bye!"

He wended his way, limping and staggering,

to the "oasis";—and Markéloff, in company with Nezhdánoff, sought out the posting-house, where they had left their tarantás, ordered the horses to be put to—and half an hour later they were rolling along the highway.

XXI

Low-hanging clouds veiled the sky—and although it was not entirely dark and the wheel-marks were visible on the road, faintly shining ahead, yet to the right and the left everything was obscured, and the outlines of detached objects flowed together into large, confused spots. —It was a dim, windless night; the breeze blew up by fits and starts in damp gusts, bringing with it the odour of rain, and of broad grain-fields. When, after passing through the oak-scrub, which served as a landmark, the time came for them to turn off into the country road, matters became still worse; the narrow way completely vanished from time to time. . . . The coachman drove more slowly.

"I hope we shall not lose our way,"—remarked Nezhdánoff, who had maintained silence up to that moment.

"No; we shall not lose our way!"—said Markéloff.—"Two calamities do not happen in one day."

"But what was the first calamity, pray?"

"The first? Why, that we have wasted the day, —do you count that as nothing?"

"Yes . . . . of course. . . . That Golúshkin!—We ought not to have drunk so much wine. I have a deadly headache now."

"I am not speaking of Golúshkin; he gave some money, at any rate;—so some profit has ensued from our visit!"

"Is it possible, then, that you regret that Pákhlin should have taken us to his . . . what the deuce was it he called them . . . his love-birds?"

"There 's no occasion for regretting that . . . nor for rejoicing at it, either. You see, I 'm not the sort of person who takes an interest in such toys. . . . I was not alluding to that calamity."

"To what one, then?"

Markéloff made no reply, and only fidgeted about a little in his corner, as though he were wrapping himself up. Nezhdánoff could not make out his face very distinctly; only his moustache formed a black, horizontal line; but ever since the morning he had been conscious of the presence in Markéloff of something which it was better not to meddle with—some dull and secret irritation.

"See here, Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch," he began, after a brief pause; "is it possible that you are seriously enraptured with the letters of that Mr. Kislyakóff, which you gave me to read to-day? Why—pardon the expression—they are balderdash!"

Markéloff straightened himself up.

"In the first place,"—said he, in a wrathful voice,—"I do not in the least share your opinion as to those letters, but find them very remarkable . . . and conscientious! And, in the second place, Kislyakóff is toiling, labouring—and, most important of all, he *believes;* he believes in our cause, he believes in the re-vo-lu-tion! I must tell you one thing, Alexyéi Dmítritch—I notice that *you*—you are growing cold toward our cause;—you do not believe in it!"

"From what do you draw that conclusion?"—articulated Nezhdánoff, slowly.

"From what? Why, from every one of your words, from your whole conduct!—To-day, at Golúshkin's, who was it that said that he did not see on what elements we could rely?—You!—Who demanded that they should be pointed out to him?—You, again! And when that friend of yours, that empty-pated merry-andrew and scoffer, Mr. Pákhlin, began, with his eyes rolled skyward, to assert that not one of us was capable of making a sacrifice, who was it that backed him up,—who was it that nodded his head approvingly?—Was n't it you?—Talk about yourself as much as you like, and as you like . . . . that is your affair . . . but I know people who have seen their way to renouncing everything which makes life fair—even the bliss of love—in order that they may serve their convictions—in order that they may not prove false to them!—Well,

you are not in the mood for that to-day, of course!"

"To-day? Why to-day in particular?"

"Come, don't dissimulate, for God's sake, you happy Don Juan, you lover crowned with myrtles!"—shouted Markéloff, entirely forgetting the coachman, who, although he did not turn round on his box, could hear everything with perfect distinctness. To tell the truth, the coachman was at that moment far more preoccupied with the road than with all the altercations of the gentlemen who were sitting behind him—and he cautiously and rather timidly loosened the reins of the shaft-horse, which tossed its head and held back as the tarantás descended some declivity which should not have been there at all.

"Pardon me—I do not understand you in the least"—said Nezhdánoff.

Markéloff burst into a constrained and malicious laugh.

"You do not understand me! Ha, ha, ha!—I know everything, my dear sir! I know with whom you exchanged declarations of love last night; I know whom you have captivated by your fortunate personal appearance and your eloquence; I know who it is that admits you to her chamber . . . . after ten o'clock at night!"

"Master!"—the coachman suddenly addressed Markéloff.—"Please to take the reins . . . I will get down and look about. . . We seem to

have lost our way. . . There 's a ravine yonder, I think. . . . ."

The tarantás was, in fact, leaning all to one side.

Markéloff seized the reins which the coachman handed to him, and went on, as loudly as before:

" I do not blame you in the least, Alexyéi Dmítritch! You have taken advantage of . . . you were right. I am merely saying that I am not surprised at your having grown cold toward the common cause; that is not what you have on your mind—I will say it once more. And I will add, incidentally, on my own account: where is the man who can divine, in advance, that precisely he is going to please the hearts of maidens—or can comprehend what they desire? . . ."

" I understand you now,"—began Nezhdánoff;—" I understand your distress, I divine who it was that watched us and hastened to communicate to you. . . ."

" Merits do not count, in that case "—pursued Markéloff, feigning not to hear Nezhdánoff, and purposely prolonging and, as it were, intoning every word—" nor any extraordinary spiritual or physical qualities. . . No! It is simply . . . that thrice-accursed luck of all illegitimate children . . of all bastards! "

Markéloff uttered the final phrase swiftly and

vehemently, and suddenly became as mute as though he had swooned.

But even through the darkness Nezhdánoff felt himself turn white all over, and chills ran down his cheeks. He could hardly refrain from hurling himself on Markéloff, from clutching him by the throat. . . . "That insult must be washed out with blood—with blood. . . ."

"I have found the road!"—cried the coachman, making his appearance beside the off front wheel—"I went a little astray, turned to the left . . . it 's all right now!—we 'll get there in a jiffy; it is n't a verst to our house. Please take your seat!"

He climbed on the box, took the reins from Markéloff, turned the shaft-horse to one side. . . The tarantás gave a couple of violent jolts—then it rolled onward more evenly and more speedily—the fog seemed to part and to lift, it curled away like smoke—a sort of hillock started up ahead. Now a light twinkled—it vanished. . . Another twinkled. . . A dog barked. . . .

"Our settlement,"—remarked the coachman; "ekh, you darling kittens!"

The lights came to meet them more and more frequently.

"After this affront,"—said Nezhdánoff, at last,—"you will easily comprehend, Sergyéi Mikhaílovitch, that it is impossible for me to pass the night under your roof; and therefore there is

nothing left for me to do, but to ask you, however disagreeable it may be to me, that on reaching home you will let me have your tarantás, which will take me to the town; to-morrow I will find means of getting home;—and from there you will receive from me the intimation which you are, in all likelihood, expecting."

Markéloff did not immediately reply.

"Nezhdánoff,"—he suddenly said, in a low, but almost despairing voice.—"Nezhdánoff! For God's sake, come into my house—if only in order that I may entreat your forgiveness on my bended knees!—Nezhdánoff! Forget . . . forget thou, forget my mad words! Akh, if any one could realise how unhappy I am!"—Markéloff smote himself with his clenched fist on the breast—and something within it seemed to utter a moan.—"Nezhdánoff, be thou magnanimous! Give me thy hand. . . . Do not refuse to forgive me!"

Nezhdánoff put out his hand to him—irresolutely, but still he put it out.—Markéloff squeezed it so hard that the other man came near crying out.

The tarantás drew up at the porch of Markéloff's house.

"Listen, Nezhdánoff,"—Markéloff said to him a quarter of an hour later, in his own study, ... "listen." (He no longer addressed him otherwise than as "thou," and in that unexpected

thou, applied to the man, in whom he had discovered a happy rival, to whom he had just dealt a bloody insult, whom he had been ready to slay, to rend in pieces—in that "thou" there lay irrevocable renunciation—and submissive, bitter entreaty—and a certain right . . . Nezhdánoff recognised that right in that he himself began to address Markéloff as *thou*).

"Listen! I told thee just now that I had renounced the happiness of love, had repelled it, in order that I might serve my convictions alone. . . . . That is nonsense, boastfulness! Nothing of the sort was ever offered to me, I had nothing to reject! I was born unlucky, and so I have remained. . . Or, perhaps it had to be so.—Therefore, my hands are not set to that—something else awaits me! If thou art able to unite both things . . . to love, and to be loved . . . . and, at the same time, to serve the cause . . . well, then thou art a gallant fellow!—I envy thee . . . . but I myself am not! I cannot. Thou art a lucky man! Thou art a lucky man!—But I cannot."

Markéloff said all this in a quiet voice, as he sat on a low chair, with drooping head, and with arms hanging like whip-lashes. Nezhdánoff was standing in front of him, absorbed in a sort of meditative attention, and although Markéloff had given him the title of a happy man, he neither looked nor felt like one.

"A woman deceived me in my youth . . . ."

went on Markéloff;—"she was a splendid girl, and yet she betrayed me . . and for whom? For a German! for an adjutant!! But Marianna . . . ."

He paused. . . He had uttered her name for the first time, and it seemed to scorch his lips.

"Marianna did not deceive me: she told me plainly that I did not please her. . . And what was there about me to please her?—Well, and she has given herself to thee. . . Well, and what of that? Was not she free?"

"But stay, stay!"—exclaimed Nezhdánoff.—"What art thou saying?—What dost thou mean by saying she has given herself?—I do not know what thy sister has written to thee; but I assure thee . . . ."

"I do not say, physically, but she has given herself morally—with her heart and her soul"—put in Markéloff, who was evidently pleased, for some reason or other, by Nezhdánoff's exclamation.—"And she has done very well indeed. And my sister. . . . Of course, she had no intention of distressing me. . . That is to say, in reality the whole thing is a matter of indifference to her; but it must be that she hates thee—and Marianna also.—She did not lie . . . . however, I have done with her!"

"Yes,"—said Nezhdánoff to himself:—"she does hate us."

"It is all for the best," pursued Markéloff,

not altering his attitude.—"Now the last fetters have been removed from me; now nothing further impedes me! Pay no heed to the fact that Golúshkin is a self-fool: that is nothing. And Kislyakóff's letters . . . possibly they are ridiculous . . . in fact; but thou must pay attention to the principal point. According to his statements . . everything is ready everywhere.—Perhaps thou dost not believe that?"

Nezhdánoff made no answer.

"Perhaps thou art right;—but, thou seest, if we are to wait for the minute when everything —absolutely everything—is ready, the time to begin will never arrive.—For if *all* the consequences are to be weighed in advance, there assuredly will be some bad ones among them. For example, when our predecessors organised the emancipation of the serfs—what then? could they foresee that one of the results of that emancipation would be the appearance of a whole class of usurious landed proprietors who would sell a peasant a quarter of rotten rye for six rubles—and receive from him" (here Markéloff bent down one finger): "in the first place, labour, to the value of the whole six rubles, and, over and above that," —(Markéloff bent down another finger)—"a whole quarter of good rye—and in addition"—(Markéloff bent a third finger)—"with a supplement! that is to say, they suck out the peasant's last drop of blood! For those emancipators

of yours could not foresee this—you must agree! And, nevertheless, even if they had foreseen it, they would have done well in liberating the peasants—and in not weighing all the consequences! And so . . . . my mind is made up!"

Nezhdánoff looked inquiringly and with surprise at Markéloff; but the latter averted his gaze to one side—to a corner. His brows contracted, and covered his eyeballs; he bit his lips and chewed his moustache.

"Yes, my mind is made up!"—he repeated, bringing his hairy, swarthy fist down on his knee with a bang.—"You see, I am stubborn. . . It is not for nothing that I am half Little Russian."

Then he rose, and shuffling his feet as though they had grown feeble, he went into his bedroom, and brought thence a small portrait of Marianna under glass.

"Take it,"—he said, in a sad but even voice; —"I made that once on a time. I draw badly; but look at it, it strikes me that it is like her"—(the portrait, sketched with pencil, in profile, really was a good likeness).—"Take it, brother; this is my last will and testament. Together with this portrait I transfer to thee not my rights . . . I never had any . . . but, thou knowest, everything! I transfer to thee everything—and her. She is a fine girl, brother! . . . ."

Markéloff stopped; his breast was heaving visibly.

"Take it. Surely, thou art not angry with me? Come, take it. But now, I need nothing . . . . of that sort."

Nezhdánoff took the portrait; but a strange feeling oppressed his breast. It seemed to him that he had no right to accept that gift; that, had Markéloff known what he, Nezhdánoff, had on his heart, perhaps he would not have given away that portrait. Nezhdánoff held in his hand that small, circular bit of cardboard, carefully mounted in a narrow black frame, with a slender line of gold paper—and did not know what to do with it.—"Why, this is the man's whole life that I hold in my hand,"—he thought. He understood what a sacrifice Markéloff was making, but why, why to him in particular?—And give away the portrait? No! That would be the most malignant insult yet.—And, in conclusion, that face was dear to him, of course; of course he loved her!

Nezhdánoff raised his eyes to Markéloff, not without some inward terror . . . lest the latter might be gazing at him—might be trying to catch his thought?—But Markéloff's eyes were again riveted on the corner, and he was chewing his moustache.

The aged servant entered the room with a candle in his hand.

Markéloff gave a start.

"It is time to go to bed, brother Alexyéi!"—

he exclaimed.—" The morning is wiser than the evening. I will give thee horses to-morrow—thou shalt drive home—and good-bye to thee."

" Good-bye to thee, also, old fellow!"—he added suddenly, addressing the servant, and tapping him on the shoulder.—" Think kindly of me!"

The old man was so astounded that he came near dropping the candles, and his gaze, fixed on his master, expressed something different from—and greater than his wonted dejection.

Nezhdánoff went away to his room. He felt uncomfortable. His head still ached from the wine he had drunk, there was a ringing in his ears, things flitted before his eyes, although he closed them. Golúshkin, Váska the clerk, Fómushka, Fímushka—spun round and round before him; afar off, the image of Marianna could not make up its mind to approach, as though it felt distrust. Everything he had done and said himself seemed to him so false and such a lie, such useless and mawkish twaddle . . . . and that which ought to be done, that toward which he should strive,—was no one knew where, inaccessible, behind ten locks, buried in the uttermost depths of hell. . . .

And he tried, incessantly, to rise, to go to Markéloff, to say to him: " Take thy gift, take it back!"

"Phew! What a disgusting thing life is!"—he exclaimed at last.

He took his departure early the next morning. Markéloff was already on the porch, surrounded by peasants. Whether he had summoned them, or whether they had come of their own accord, Nezhdánoff did not find out; Markéloff took leave of him in a very curt and monosyllabic way .... but appeared to be making up his mind to communicate to him something important. The old servant was in evidence, also, with his immutable gaze.

The tarantás soon dashed through the town, and turning into the fields, rolled briskly along. —The horses were the same; but the coachman, —whether because Nezhdánoff lived in a wealthy house, or for some other reason, he reckoned upon a fine tip .... nevertheless, it is a well-known fact: when the coachman has had a drink of liquor, or confidently expects one—the horses make excellent speed. It was June weather, though cool; there were lofty sportive clouds in the blue sky, a strong even breeze, the road was free from dust, which had been laid by the rain of the preceding day, the willows were rustling and shimmering and rippling,—everything was stirring and flying,—the cry of the quail was borne, in a shrill whistle, from the distant hillocks, across the green ravines, exactly as though the cry had wings, and were flying with them,—the daws

were gleaming in the sunlight, something resembling dark-hued fleas was walking along the level line of the bare horizon . . . it was peasants ploughing the fallow fields for the second time.

But Nezhdánoff allowed all this to pass him by . . . he did not even notice when he reached the Sipyágin estate—to such a degree was he engrossed in his thoughts.

But he shuddered when he espied the roof of the house, the upper story, the window of Marianna's chamber.—"Yes,"—he said to himself,—and his heart grew warm:—"*he* is right—she is a fine girl—and I love her."

XXII

He hastily changed his clothes and went to give Kólya his lesson.—Sipyágin, whom he encountered in the dining-room, bowed to him coldly and politely—and, filtering through his teeth the words: "Did you have a good time?"—pursued his way to his study.—The statesman had already determined, in his ministerial mind, that as soon as the vacation was over, he would instantly despatch that "decidedly too handsome" —teacher to Petersburg, and, in the meanwhile, would keep a sharp eye on him.—"*Je n'ai pas eu la main heureuse cette fois-ci,*" he thought to himself; "however, *j'aurais pu tomber pire.*"—Valentína Mikhaílovna's sentiments toward Nezhdánoff were far more energetic and clearly defined. She could no longer tolerate him at all. . . . He, that horrid little boy!—he had insulted her.—Marianna had made no mistake: it was she, Valentína Mikhaílovna, who had played the eavesdropper in the corridor on her and Nezhdánoff. . . . The illustrious lady had not disdained to do this. In the course of the two days during which he had been absent, she, although she said nothing to her "light-minded" relative,

—yet constantly gave her to understand, that she knew all, that she would have been incensed, were it not, in part, that she scorned, in part commiserated her. . . . Repressed, inward disdain filled her cheeks, a sentiment which was both mocking and compassionate elevated her brows when she glanced at Marianna or spoke to her; her wonderful eyes lingered with soft amazement, with sorrowful fastidiousness on the presumptuous young girl who, after all her " freaks and eccentricities," had ended by ki . . . is . . . sing in a dark room a student who had not graduated from the university!

Poor Marianna! Her stern, proud lips had known no kisses as yet.

But Valentína Mikhaílovna never hinted to her husband at the discovery she had made; she contented herself with accompanying the few words which she addressed to Marianna in *his* presence—with an expressive little simper, which had nothing whatever to do with their tenor.—Valentína Mikhaílovna even felt rather repentant for having written that letter to her brother. . . . . But, after all, she preferred to repent, and that the thing should have been done—rather than not repent, and that letter should have remained unwritten.

Nezhdánoff caught a glimpse of Marianna in the dining-room, at breakfast. He thought she had grown thin and sallow: she was not pretty

that day; but the swift glance which she cast at him, as soon as he entered the room, pierced his very heart.—On the other hand, Valentína Mikhaílovna stared at him as though she were constantly repeating inwardly:—"I offer you my congratulations! Very fine, indeed! Very clever!"—and, at the same time, as though she would have liked to read in his countenance whether Markéloff had shown him her letter or not?—She eventually decided that he had shown it.

Sipyágin, on learning that Nezhdánoff had been to the factory which Solómin managed, began to interrogate him about that "establishment, in every respect interesting to industry;"—and becoming promptly convinced, from the young man's replies, that he had actually seen nothing there himself, he relapsed into majestic silence, as though censuring himself for having expected any practical information from such an immature person!—As Marianna quitted the dining-room, she contrived to whisper to Nezhdánoff:

"Wait for me in the old birch-grove, at the end of the park;—I will go there as soon as I can."—Nezhdánoff thought: "She, also, addresses me as 'thou'—just as he did."—And how pleasant, though rather painful, it was to him! . . . and how strange it would have been—yes, fairly impossible—had she suddenly begun

again to call him "you"—if she had turned away from him. . . .

He felt that that would be a misfortune for him.—Whether he was in love with her—he did not yet know; but she had become dear to him—and close to him—and necessary to him . . . . that was the principal thing: necessary—he felt that, with his whole being.

The grove whither Marianna had despatched him consisted of a hundred lofty, ancient, chiefly weeping birches. The wind had not died down; the long tufts of branches swayed and fluttered about like loosely-flowing locks of hair; the clouds, as before, were floating high aloft and swiftly;—and when one of them flitted across the sun, everything round about became, not dark, but uniform in hue.—But now it passed over—and suddenly, everywhere, brilliant flecks of light tossed mutinously again: they became entangled, they shimmered, they intermingled with spots of shadow . . . the sound and the movement were identical; but what a festive joy was added thereto! With the same sort of joyous effort does passion force its way into the darkened heart. . . . And just that sort of a heart did Nezhdánoff bear in his breast.

He leaned against the trunk of a birch-tree and began to wait.—He did not—strictly speaking—know what he felt—and he did not wish to know; he felt more afraid, and more at ease,

than he had at Markéloff's. He wished, first of all, to see her, to talk with her; that knot which suddenly binds two living beings had already seized him in its grasp.—Nezhdánoff called to mind the rope which flies to the shore from the steamer when the latter is about to make a landing. . . . . Now it has encircled a post, and the steamer comes to a halt. . . . .

In port! Thank God!

He suddenly shuddered. A woman's gown was flitting along the path in the distance. It was she. But whether she was approaching him or receding from him, he did not know, until he saw the spots of light and shadow glide across her face *from below upward* . . . which signified that she was approaching. They would have glided *downward from above,* had she been receding. A few moments more and she stood by his side, in front of him, with welcoming, vivacious countenance, with a caressing gleam in her eyes, with lips which smiled faintly but merrily.—He grasped her outstretched hands—but for the moment was unable to articulate a single word;—neither did she say anything. She had walked very rapidly, and was slightly out of breath; but it was obvious that she was greatly rejoiced by his joy.

She was the first to speak.

"Well, what news,"—she began,—"tell me,

as quickly as possible, what you have decided on?"

Nezhdánoff was astonished.

"Decided. . . . Why, was it necessary to decide now?"

"Come, thou understandest me.—Tell me what thou hast talked about? Whom hast thou seen?—Hast thou made acquaintance with Solómin?—Tell me everything . . . . everything! Stay, let us go further away. I know a spot . . . we shall not be visible there."

She drew him after her. He followed her obediently across-lots, through the tall, sparse, dry grass.

She led him to the place she wished. There lay a huge birch, overturned by a tempest. They seated themselves on its trunk.

"Tell me!"—she repeated, but instantly added:—"Akh, how glad I am to see thee! It seemed to me as though those two days would never come to an end. Thou knowest, I am now thoroughly convinced that Valentína Mikhaílovna overheard us."

"She wrote to Markéloff about it,"—said Nezhdánoff.

"To him?"

Marianna paused, and gradually blushed all over,—not with shame, but with another, a more violent emotion.—"The spiteful, wicked woman!"—she whispered slowly:—"she had no

right to do that. . . . Well, it makes no difference! Tell your story, tell your story."

Nezhdánoff began to speak. . . . . Marianna listened to him with a sort of petrified attention —and only interrupted him when she perceived that he was hurrying on, and not pausing over details.—But not all the details of his trip were of equal interest to her; she laughed over Fómushka and Fímushka, but they did not interest her. Their mode of existence was too remote from her.

"It is exactly as though thou wert imparting to me information about Nebuchadnezzar,"—she remarked.

But when it came to what Markéloff said, to what even Golúshkin thought (although she immediately comprehended what sort of a bird he was)—and, most of all, when it came to Solómin's opinion—and to the manner of man he was—that was what she required to know, that was what fretted her. "But when? when?"—that question was constantly whirling in her brain, was rising to her lips, all the while that Nezhdánoff was talking. But he appeared to avoid everything which might afford a decisive answer to that question. He himself began to notice that he was dwelling upon precisely those details which were least interesting to Marianna . . . . and kept incessantly reverting to them. Humorous descriptions evoked her indignation;

a disenchanted or dejected tone grieved her. . . He was obliged to recur constantly to "the cause," to "the question." On those points no prolixity wearied her. Nezhdánoff recalled the time when, while still a student, and living at the villa of some good friends of his, during the summer, he had undertaken to tell the children fairy-stories:—and they, also, had not appreciated either descriptions, or the expression of his personal sentiments . . . . they also had demanded action, facts!—Marianna was no child, but she resembled a child in straightforwardness and simplicity of feeling.

Nezhdánoff praised Markéloff sincerely and warmly—and expressed himself with peculiar sympathy in regard to Solómin. As he spoke of him, in almost exaggerated terms, he asked himself: what, in particular it was which had caused him to cherish so lofty an opinion concerning that man? He had uttered nothing especially clever: some of his remarks even seemed to be at variance with the views of Nezhdánoff himself. . . . "A well-balanced character," he thought:—"that 's what it is; methodical, fresh, as Fímushka said;—a big man; a calm, strong force; he knows what he wants, and has confidence in himself—and he arouses confidence; there is no anxiety in him . . . . and there is equilibrium! equilibrium! . . . . That is the chief thing; precisely what I do not possess." Nezhdánoff relapsed into si-

lence, engrossed in meditation. . . . . All of a sudden he felt the touch of a hand on his shoulder.

He raised his head: Marianna was regarding him with solicitous and tender gaze.

"Friend! what is the matter with thee?"—she asked.

He removed her hand from his shoulder, and, for the first time, he kissed that small, but powerful hand. Marianna laughed a little, as though surprised; what had put such a piece of gallantry into his head?—then she became thoughtful in her turn.

"Did Markéloff show thee Valentína Mikhaílovna's letter?"—she asked at last.

"Yes."

"Well . . and what did he do?"

"He?—He is the noblest, the most self-sacrificing being! He . . . ." Nezhdánoff was on the point of telling Marianna about the portrait —but refrained, and merely repeated:—"the most noble being!"

"Oh, yes, yes!"

Again Marianna fell into thought—and, suddenly turning to Nezhdánoff on the bole of the tree, which served them both as a seat, she said slyly:

"Well, and what did you decide upon?"

Nezhdánoff shrugged his shoulders.

"Why, I have already told thee, that—for the present—nothing is decided upon; we must wait a while yet."

"Wait a while. . . . What for?"

"For the final instructions." ("I am lying," —flashed through Nezhdánoff's mind.)

"From whom?"

"From that . . . thou knowest . . . . from Vasíly Nikoláevitch. And then we must also wait until Ostrodúmoff returns."

Marianna cast a questioning glance at Nezhdánoff.

"Tell me, hast thou ever seen that Vasíly Nikoláevitch?"

"I have seen him a couple of times . . . . had a glimpse of him."

"What is he like . . . . a remarkable man?"

"How shall I describe him to thee? Now he is the head—well, and he manages matters. And we cannot dispense with discipline in our cause; there must be obedience." ("And *that* is all nonsense,"—thought Nezhdánoff to himself.)

"What sort of a man is he?"

"What sort of a man?—very thick-set, ponderous, dark-skinned. . . . He has a face with high cheek-bones, a coarse . . . . Kalmýk face. Only his eyes are very animated."

"And how does he talk?"

"He commands, rather than talks."

"Why has he been made the head?"

"He is a man of strong character. He shrinks from nothing. If necessary—he will commit murder. Well—and he is feared."

"And what sort of a man is Solómin?"

"Solómin, also, is anything but handsome; only, he has a splendid face, simple, and honest. Among theological students—the nice ones—such faces are sometimes to be found."

Nezhdánoff gave a detailed description of Solómin. Marianna gazed at Nezhdánoff for a long . . . . long . . . time, then said, as if to herself:

"Thou, also, hast a fine face. I think one might live happily with thee."

This remark touched Nezhdánoff; he took her hand again—and was on the point of raising it to his lips. . . .

"Defer thy gallantries,"—said Marianna, laughing—she always laughed when her hand was kissed;—"thou dost not know: I am guilty toward thee."

"In what way?"

"In this way.—In thine absence, I went into thy room—and there, on thy table, I saw a note-book with poetry. . . ." (Nezhdánoff shuddered: he remembered that he actually had forgotten that note-book on the table in his room),—"and I make my confession to thee: I could not conquer my curiosity—and I read it.—Assuredly, those are thy verses?"

"Yes; and dost thou know what, Marianna? The fact that I am hardly angry at all with thee may serve thee as the best proof of the degree to

which I am attached to thee, and to which I trust thee."

"Hardly? That means that thou art, at least, a little angry?—By the way, thou callest me Marianna; but I cannot call thee Nezhdánoff! I will call thee Alexyéi. And the poem which begins: 'Dear friend, when I shall die . . . .' is thine also?"

"Yes . . . yes.—Only, please drop the subject. . . . Do not torture me."

Marianna shook her head.

"It is very sad. . . That poem. . . . I hope thou didst write it before thou hadst become close friends with me. But the verses are good, so far as I can judge. It strikes me, that thou mightest become a literary man, only, I am *quite* sure, that thy vocation is something better and more lofty than literature. It was well to occupy thyself with that before,—when the other was impossible."

Nezhdánoff darted a swift glance at her.

"Dost thou think so? Well, I agree with thee. Better ruin there—than success here."

Marianna rose impetuously to her feet.

"Yes, my dear one, thou art right!"—she exclaimed—and her whole face beamed, lighted up with the flame and the lustre of enthusiasm, with the emotion of magnanimous sentiments:—"thou art right!—But, perhaps we shall not go to destruction immediately; we shall succeed, thou wilt

see, we shall be of use, our life will not have been lived in vain, we shall go to the people. . . . Dost thou know any handicraft? No? Well, never mind—we will work, we will bear to them, our brethren, everything which we know—I, if necessary, will go as a cook, as a seamstress, as a laundress. . . . Thou shalt see, thou shalt see. . . . . And there will be no merit in it—only happiness, happiness. . . ."

Marianna ceased speaking; but her eyes, riveted on the distance, not on that which lay outspread before her—but on that other unknown one, which had never yet existed, but which she descried,—her eyes blazed. . . .

Nezhdánoff bent to her waist. . . .

"Oh, Marianna!" he whispered,—"I am not worthy of thee!"

She suddenly gave a violent start.

"It is time to go home—high time!"—she said,—"or they will be hunting us up directly. However, Valentína Mikhaílovna seems to have washed her hands of me. In her eyes, I am—a lost woman!"

Marianna uttered the last two words with such a bright, joyous face, that Nezhdánoff, as he looked at her, could not help smiling and repeating—"a lost woman!"

"Only, she feels deeply insulted,"—went on Marianna, "because thou art not at her feet.—But all that is nothing—but see here. . . Of

course, it is impossible for me to remain here . . . I must run away."

"Run away?"—repeated Nezhdánoff.

"Yes, run away. . . For, surely, thou art not going to remain?—We will go away together. . . . Thou wilt go with me, wilt thou not?"

"To the ends of the earth!"—exclaimed Nezhdánoff—and a certain impulsive gratitude suddenly rang out in his voice.—"To the ends of the earth!"—At that moment he actually would have gone away with her, with a glance behind him, whithersoever she desired!

Marianna understood him—and heaved a gentle, blissful sigh.

"Then take my hand . . . only, do not kiss it—and press it firmly, as a comrade, as a friend . . there, that 's the way!"

They walked homeward together, thoughtful, happy,—the young grass caressed their feet, the young foliage rustled round about them; the patches of light and shadow flitted swiftly athwart their garments—and they both smiled at this tremulous play, and at the gay gusts of wind, and the fresh glitter of the leaves—and at their own youth, and at each other.